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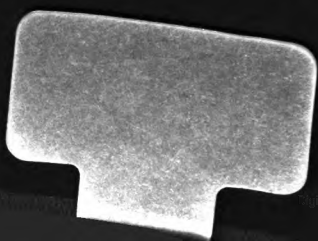
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·A·REMEMBRANCE·
·FOR·THE·LIVING·
·TO·PRAY·FOR·THE·DEAD·



MUMFORD S.J.





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No. II.

A REMEMBRANCE FOR THE LIVING
TO PRAY FOR THE DEAD.

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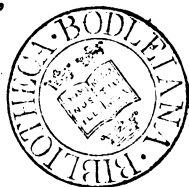
A
REMEMBRANCE FOR THE LIVING
TO PRAY FOR THE DEAD,

By JAMES MUMFORD,
PRIEST OF THE SOCIETY OF JESUS.

REPRINTED FROM THE EDITION OF 1661.

WITH AN APPENDIX ON THE HEROIC ACT,

By JOHN MORRIS,
Priest of the same Society.



Remember them that are in bands, as if you were bound with them.—*Heb. xiii. 3.*

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INTRODUCTION.

JAMES MUMFORD, a native of the county of Norfolk, was born in the year 1606. His name is spelt in various ways. The Catalogue of the English Province S.J. for the year 1642, calls him "Momford." That for the year 1655 calls him, in the body of it, "Jacobus Momfordus," whilst in the index to the same it has "Mumfordus." Mr. Dodd, in a very brief notice of this Father, in his *Church History*, vol. iii., p. 321, calls him "Monford;" and Father Nathaniel Southwell, in his *Bibliotheca Scriptorum Societatis Jesu* (Rome, 1676) gives his name as "Jacobus Mumfordus."

He entered the Society of Jesus in the year 1626, made his noviceship at Watten, and was professed of the four vows on the 29th September, 1641. In the Catalogue of the Province for the year 1642, he appears as Father Minister of the English College S.J. at Liège, at the same time being Consultor of the College and teaching humanities. He was subsequently Rector of the College. In the Catalogue for the year 1655, he is entered as serving in the College

of the Holy Apostles, which comprised the Jesuit missions in the counties of Essex, Sussex, Norfolk, and Cambridge. He is stated to be then forty-nine years of age, and of weak health, with the mention of a goodly array of offices in which he had been previously employed, such as Rector, Confessarius, Spiritual Father, Socius to the Master of Novices, Minister, Consultor, Professor of Sacred Scripture and of Moral Theology.

About the year 1650 he was Missionary Priest at Norwich, the first of whose residence in that city we have any record. In those evil days every Priest in England lived in the constant expectation of confessorship, if not of martyrdom. Father Mumford had the honour of bearing insults and imprisonment for his Master. A few years before his death he was betrayed and apprehended at Norwich. He was paraded through the streets of that city by the *posse comitatus*, who carried his priestly vestments on their halberds, the Father being dressed in a Priest's cloak. His interior joy at being called thus to suffer for Christ was so expressed by the cheerfulness of his countenance as to make no little impression on the people. After some days' imprisonment in the common jail, he was sent by boat, handcuffed and manacled, to Yarmouth; a journey that occupied a day and a night. Norwich, however, conceiving its rights and privileges injured by the transfer, he was

brought back again, and, though kept in prison, was treated with less rigour. He had a separate cell allowed him, and the Catholics being permitted to bring him his breviary and other books, he occupied his time in writing his *Catholic Scripturist*, which was first published in Ghent in 1662, and has since been three times reprinted. After some months' imprisonment he was permitted to go at large on bail, but again and again he was obliged to reappear at the bar as the judges came on circuit, till at length, his accuser having ceased to appear, and no legal proof of his priesthood being forthcoming, he was liberated.

Father Mumford died in England on the 9th of March, 1666, in his sixtieth year, and the twenty-sixth of his service of the English mission.

Father Mumford had a most charitable love for the suffering souls in Purgatory, offering for them the satisfactions of all his labours and sufferings. To spread the same devotion he published a 12^{mo} treatise in 1641, at St. Omers, called, *A Remembrance for the Living to pray for the Dead*, and six years afterwards, at Liège, a Latin treatise entitled, *De misericordiâ fidelibus defunctis exhibendâ*. The latter was translated into French by Père Brignon, S.J., with Triessem's letters to Father Mumford (Paris, 1691). Besides these books and the *Catholic Scripturist*, Father Mumford wrote *A Vindication of St. Gregorie his Dialogues* (London, 1660), and *The Question of Questions, which,*

rightly resolved, resolveth all our questions in religion. This question is, Who ought to be our judge in all these our differences? By Optatus Ductor (Ghent, 1658, and London, 1686).

The Annual Letters of the English Province for the year 1650-1, relate as follows the circumstances under which the latter of the two works in behalf of the Holy Souls was reprinted at Cologne.

“Of Father Mumford’s pious and instructive treatise on compassion for the Faithful departed, the first edition had been nearly sold off, and William Triessem, the printer at Cologne, was about to publish a second edition, when a son of his, a little boy of four years old, was taken dangerously ill, and deriving no benefit from medical treatment, seemed drawing near his end. The printer, being a pious man, and according to his custom desiring to read some spiritual work, and seek consolation in religion, took up the first pious book that presented itself, which happened to be Father Mumford’s treatise. Meeting with that part of it in which the author represents works of charity to the souls in Purgatory as very efficacious for obtaining all favours from God, the good man felt himself impelled to have recourse to this means of obtaining of God the recovery of his son. His trade gave shape to his purpose, and going that morning to the church, kneeling before the high altar, he made the following vow to Almighty God :

‘Oh, my God, if it pleases your Divine Majesty to restore my boy to health, I here vow to distribute one hundred copies of this treatise gratuitously to Religious and Ecclesiastics, as the persons most likely to diffuse the devotion it recommends.’ Having made this vow, and returned home from his place of business to dinner, he heard with joy and gratitude that his son was asking for food, and the next day the boy’s recovery was already far advanced. The father faithfully fulfilled his vow. The worthy publisher experienced a second time the efficacy of this work of charity. His wife fell dangerously ill, but recovered on his vowing to distribute gratis two hundred copies of the salutary treatise.”

A later edition of the *Remembrance*, &c., bears the name of Paris as that of its place of publication. The first part was printed in 1660, in a 12^{mo} volume of 480 pages. The second part, containing 138 pages, was published in the following year. On the title-page of the first part it is called, “The second edition, augmented and altered by the author, as the Preface declares.” The Preface “to the Catholique Reader” begins thus :

“Almost twenty years are past since I composed a small treatise as a *Remembrance for the Living to pray for the Dead*. But this unfortunate island began presently to be almost as violently tossed within by the waves of sedition and rebellion, as it is battered

without by the restless billows of its encircling ocean. Whence that little work, as it was made and printed beyond the sea, so also all the copies of it were almost dispersed among such Catholics as the fury of those times had enforced to leave their native country. Times changing, a second edition seemed expedient."

From this we gather, what Father Nathaniel Southwell distinctly says, that this edition was really printed in London, though it bears the imprint of Paris.

The first part is not now reprinted. It is not only controversial, and therefore out of keeping with the purpose of a series of ascetical books, but the chief point confuted is a curious error long since forgotten, that "souls, once detained in Purgatory, be not thence deliverable before the last general resurrection."

Of the work that is now reproduced, the author says, in the same Preface, "This second part is properly that which may be truly said to have a second edition in English, but yet not without some alteration and increase, particularly by some additions taken out of my larger Latin treatise, which hath been translated into several languages. The whole scope of it is to inflame the will towards that never sufficiently commendable devotion of praying for the dead. And because this part is proper for such as seriously desire to exercise themselves in practice of

piety, and are either unable or unwilling to attend to School disputations concerning points in which already they are as well settled as our learnedest forefathers cared to be, I have thought fit to print it in a volume apart, yet so as to account it a part of this whole work (to which it may be joined by those who please) that all may understand nothing to be there delivered by me for increase of piety, which in my first part hath not been proved to be solidly grounded in the exactest rigour of divinity."

This book has lately appeared in French, edited by the Abbé Bouix, who has prefixed it to the treatise of St. Catherine of Genoa, giving it at the same time the high praise that it is the best treatise with which he is acquainted on the subject of which it treats. It would be hard that it should be more accessible to foreign readers than to the author's fellow-countrymen for whose edification it was written.

THE AUTHOR'S PREFACE.

BESIDES many who erroneously think there is no such matter as a Purgatory, and, consequently, that it is a vain thing to pray for the dead, there be many who, either for want of sufficient instruction in that which they believe, or by inconsideration of what they believe, do pass over this important business of praying for the dead so coldly, as that they think they do enough to help their own, yea, Christ's own brother, if they do but say—"God rest his soul," which is a most unmerciful manner of proceeding. For if we saw our little brother fall into the fire, we should never be so hard-hearted as to see him broil there, and persuade ourselves it were charity enough to throw a little drop of water into the fire somewhat to assuage his torment. And so I know not how it comes to pass that many flatter themselves with the name of good-natured and kind-hearted creatures, who, notwithstanding, take so little to heart this extreme necessity of their brethren that their thoughts are busied about nothing less than relieving them. The intention, therefore, of this present treatise is more at large to stir up in the will of all faithful believers an ardent desire to redress the unspeakable miseries of these distressed souls, that we may "remember those that are in bands, as if we were bound with them."*

* Heb. xiii. 3.

TO THE DEVOUT AND CHARITABLE READER.

“LORD,” saith holy David, “what is man that Thou art mindful of him?”* The Hebrew word *Enosch*, which David in this place useth to signify man, doth most properly signify a most miserable forgetful creature, so that, in the language of Scripture, a man and a creature most miserable and most forgetful is all one. This forgetfulness is chiefly in things of the other life, which, though they be never so important, never so much inculcated, yet find either no place at all or the very least and last in our thoughts.

I did not, therefore, without particular reason entitle this brief treatise *A Remembrance for the Living to pray for the Dead*, for I think, dear reader, that if thou hast the heart of a man, and not a stone in place of a heart, this *Remembrance* will stir thee up to afford far more assistance to these distressed souls in Purgatory than thou didst use to do, merely for want of due remembrance, reflection, and consideration of this matter.

In this second part I everywhere suppose myself to speak with such a Catholic reader as rests fully satisfied with these two verities—first, that there is a Purgatory; secondly, that souls are now deliverable from thence before the Day of Judgment. For if the reader be not thoroughly satisfied in both these points, this treatise speaks not to him until he hath perused my first part, which wholly is ordained to give him such satisfaction in these two points that here we may solidly proceed, without any noise of disputation, to such things as merely appertain to devotion.

* Psalm viii. 5.

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A

REMEMBRANCE FOR THE LIVING TO PRAY FOR THE DEAD.



THE FIRST CHAPTER.

THE FIRST MOTIVE TO PRAY FOR THE SOULS IN
PURGATORY, WHICH IS, THE GREATNESS OF THE
SENSIBLE PAINS THEY SUFFER.

NATURE doth teach us, that the most forcible eloquence to move compassion is that which setteth forth the greatness of our misery. The miseries which these 'poor souls suffer are reduced to two. The one *pœna sensus*, which is the sensible pain they feel, caused by the excessive bitterness of their torments. The other is called *pœna damni*, which is that inexplicable anguish of mind and grief, arising from the lively apprehension of the loss of God, which for a time they are to sustain; to which we may add the long continuance of their torments. From these three we will draw the motives, which (if they be well pondered) may make the hardest Pharaoh-like heart in the world to take some compassion on these poor souls.

B

2. The first motive, then, is the greatness of that sensible pain, caused by the excessive sharpness of these torments. How great and how bitter the torments be, speaking of that which happeneth for the most part, and not that which sometimes may happen to some few innocent souls (whose sins were small, and whose penance great), how great, I say, these torments are, speaking of them as they are for the most part, may be showed.

3. Firstly. Because the torments of Purgatory exceed all, even the very greatest, torments of this life. St. Austin, upon these words of St. Paul—"But they shall be saved, yet so as by fire," writeth thus*—"Because St. Paul doth say that these men 'shall be saved, yet so as by fire,' therefore this fire is condemned; but surely, although they shall be saved by it, yet this fire is more grievous than whatsoever a man can suffer in this life; albeit you know how great and how intolerable things men have suffered, or may suffer." And the same St. Austin saith, "This fire, I tell you, though it be not everlasting, yet it is passing grievous, for it doth far pass all pains that any man can suffer in this life. Never was there yet found out so great a pain in flesh as that is, though Martyrs have suffered strange torments, and many malefactors exceeding great punishments."† Again, the same holy Father maketh us a very excellent and necessary exhortation, out of this his so often delivered doctrine. "Some men," saith he, "used to say, I care not greatly how long I stay in this

* On Psalm xxxvii.

† *De vera et falsa Penit.*, cap. xviii.

passing fire, seeing that at last I shall attain to life everlasting. But alas, dear brother, let no man say thus, because this Purgatory fire is more sharp than any punishment which in this life can be seen, imagined, or felt. He that now will be loth to put one of his fingers into burning fire, ought to fear the torment of that fire."

4. Other holy Doctors have had the like feeling of this matter. The great St. Gregory writeth thus on the third Penitential Psalm—"I know that after this life some must be cleansed by purging fire, and others must receive sentence of eternal damnation; but because I esteem that purging fire, though it be transitory, to be more intolerable than all the tribulation that in this life can be suffered, I greatly fear to be purged in the wrath of transitory vengeance." And Venerable Bede, on the same Psalm, affirmeth "That no torture either of the Martyrs or malefactors can be compared with the pains of Purgatory."

5. Secondly. It is an opinion not improbable, that the very least torment in Purgatory doth surpass the very greatest in this world. Of this opinion is our learned St. Anselm, who speaking of these torments, saith—"Of the which the least is bigger than the biggest which in this life can be devised."* Amongst the Epistles of St. Austin there is one which some think St. Cyril to have written, in which there be these most fearful words—"There is not a man living who had not rather be tormented with all the pains and torments together which all the men in the world,

* "De quibus minimum majus est quàm maximum quod in hac vita excogitari potest" (*Elucidat.*).

from Adam until this time, have suffered, than be for one day tormented with the least pain which is either in hell or Purgatory.”* Yea, St. Thomas, Prince of the Divines, doth prove this to be most true. “In Purgatory,” saith he, “there is a double pain. The one from the loss of God; the other is the sensible pain. And according to both these pains, the least pain in Purgatory exceeds the greatest pain of this life.”† So he. Out of which discourse it follows that there is not any one in Purgatory who doth not, every instant that he is there, suffer more than is or can be suffered in this world, though all miseries should meet in one. Others may be of a contrary opinion, but their opinion may be perhaps more contrary to truth.

6. Thirdly. It is an opinion most commonly received amongst the greatest Divines, that the torments of Purgatory, for the time they last, be as grievous as the torments of hell. “The pains of hell and Purgatory be of one greatness; but those of hell expect no end, those of Purgatory have an end,” saith the author of the Epistle which we have cited out of St. Austin. And St. Thomas, in the place cited—“It is the same fire which torments the Just in Purgatory and the damned in hell.”‡ These opinions I thought good to set down, not as if they were articles of faith (for then they were not opinions), but to the end we may see what feeling these great Saints and Doctors of God’s Church have had of this point. And I add—

7. Fourthly. That reason itself, enlightened by faith, doth convince these torments to be exceeding

* *Epist.* ccvi. † *Suppl.*, q. 72, a. 1. ‡ *Q.* 69, a. 8.

great, because these souls, though they be saved, "shall be saved, yet so as by fire."* Now, of all the torments which can be suffered, none is so painful as that of fire, and perhaps all the other torments which our world hath can scarce so bitterly torture a poor creature as it would be tortured, if it were possible for us to be kept without consuming in the midst of the merciless flames of a glass furnace, the fire of which would soon, as it were, penetrate itself with the very inmost parts of that afflicted wretch; his bones would glow like red-hot bars of iron, his marrow would scorch him more fiercely than melted lead, his blood would boil more furiously than high-seething oil, his nails, his teeth, his gristles, his very skull would be like plates of bright flaming brass, all on burning fire. But alas! dear brother, there be many differences between our hottest fire and the scorching flames of Purgatory. Our fire was created by God merely for our comfort and commodity; that fire is made for no other end than to afflict, pain, and torment those guilty souls. Our fire, by being out of the proper sphere, by being mingled with grosser and duller elements, by contrary qualities which be round about it, and the contrariety which it findeth in the matter it feedeth on, hath the native force, activity, and fierceness much abated. That fire hath not one of these hindrances, but exerciseth continually in the highest degree all the force of its native fury. In fine, our fire in comparison of that fire, by holy Doctors, and namely by our worthy countryman, Sir Thomas More, in the end of his rare work called the

* 1 Cor. iii. 15.

Supplication of the Soul, &c., is styled and esteemed a kind of "painted fire rather than true fire."

8. Fifthly. The more learned may ponder attentively those words of the Angelical Doctor, St. Thomas, in the place above cited. "Seeing that," saith he, "grief is not the hurt itself, but the feeling of the hurt, every man grieves so much the more for any hurt by how much he is more sensible; whence such hurts as are caused in parts more sensible cause great grief. And because the whole sensitive faculty of the body is from the soul, therefore if any hurtful agent be elevated to act upon the soul itself, she must necessarily be most grievously afflicted. Seeing, therefore, the soul doth suffer from Purgatory fire, therefore the pain of Purgatory must needs be such as surpasses all the pain of this life." All this St. Thomas. And even those few Doctors who deny true fire in Purgatory, grant such spiritual grief in the soul as exceeds all torments. And, therefore, what we have said in contemplating the torment of true fire will still fall short of expressing the truth. These considerations made the devout St. Bernard break into these pathetic words: "Oh, would to God some man would now beforehand provide for my head abundance of water, and to my eyes a fountain of tears, for so perhaps the burning fire would take no hold where running tears had cleansed before."*

9. Two other considerations may be added unto these; the one is the cause why these torments are inflicted, which is the making of due satisfaction for sin, which though it be but venial, yet being that it is

* *De Tribul.*, xvi. and lv., on the Canticles.

an offence of God, is a thing so detestable, that it cannot be committed either for the gaining of ten thousand worlds, or the avoiding of the greatest evil possible, because the goodness of God is not to be violated and displeased, His sacred majesty is not the least to be dishonoured (being that it is sovereign and infinite) for the good of any inferior creature that is, or may be. Wherefore the so light commission of so many venial sins as men daily and hourly commit cannot be expiated but by punishment of a higher rank than we can imagine. And this is the reason why the learned Doctors and holiest Saints, who had most light of God's greatness, had also greatest feeling of the pains due to every little offence of so infinite a nature; and this is the reason why they, whose understandings are either clouded with natural ignorance, or obscured with sinful affections, or wholly darkened with heresy, are as dull in apprehending these pains as they are blockish in forming a worthy conceit of God's infinite goodness and supreme sovereignty.

10. The other thing here considerable is, that the day of mercy ending with the day of our life, we are after to expect nothing else but justice; and therefore our Saviour doth verily say unto us, that we shall not go out of this prison "until we have paid the last farthing."* Which is a terrible consideration, if we have a due feeling of our debts; whereunto what we are to say in the third chapter will exceedingly help. Neither can Protestants be scandalized at what hath here been said, if they remember that according to

* St. Matt. v. 26.

their faith all sins are mortal, and therefore deserve everlasting pains.

11. Well, then, these distressed souls suffering such things as none who hath the heart of a man could endure to see a dog suffer if he could ease him; and these souls being the souls of our brethren, the souls of Christ's brethren, the souls which He loved so dearly that He most joyfully shed the very last drop of blood in His body for their sakes, how can we thus slight their complaints with a deaf ear? Oh, if we were in this pitiful case, how hotly should we cite those words of our Saviour, that voice, that outcry of nature herself, "Whatsoever you would that men should do to you, do you also to them."* Denis the Carthusian relateth the words of one who by divine revelation was admitted to see these torments, and indeed they be worth relating. "God is my witness," saith he, "that if I did see any man, though this man had as cruelly as man could either misused, tortured, or killed my dearest friends, and done me all the mischief which one man could do to another, yet if I did see this man condemned to such pains as there (in Purgatory) I beheld, I would a thousand times, if it could be done, suffer death for his delivery."† Such force hath this consideration, lively apprehended.

* St. Matt. vii. 12.

† *De Judic. Anim.*, art. 23.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

THE SECOND MOTIVE, DRAWN FROM THE INTOLERABLE PAINS THE SOULS SUFFER BY BEING BANISHED FROM THE SIGHT OF GOD.

TO understand how great a pain it is to be banished, though but for a time, from the face of God, is a thing wholly impossible, until we come to know what an infinite good it is to possess God ; but we may have some little scantling of it by these considerations.

2. The first consideration. All the joy, pleasure, dainties, riches, and honours of this world, yea, and of a million of worlds, though they were a million times more excellent than this world is, and all this joy and happiness were eternal ; yet all this put together, and enjoyed as perfectly as might be, is a thing noways comparable to that happiness which the possession of God for only one moment doth bring with it ; so that to be deprived of this possession, debarred of that happiness, restrained of this bliss (when we are in a state capable of it, and requiring it) is a misery without all comparison greater than should be the loss of all the riches, honours, and pleasures which the eternal possession of a million of worlds a million of times more pleasant than our world could afford. What grief then must the loss of this good cause in a soul that knoweth her loss ?

3. The second consideration. All the torments of this world, though they were a thousand times greater, ought, according to right reason, to be joyfully

suffered, if by the suffering of them altogether we might be able to purchase the sight of God but for one moment; for to see God is such a good, that it would seem cheap bought with all those evils; His sight being good of a far higher order than any evil can be an evil. Hence it followeth that the suffering (though but for a moment) the loss of this good is a misery inconceivable. How clear is this, and yet how little understood!

4. The third consideration may be taken from the lively and clear manner with which these souls have their whole mind and attention fast bent, both night and day, upon the greatness of this so infinite a loss. We know by experience that in matter of pain, anguish, and misery, nothing torments more than wholly to give ourselves over, or rather to be carried by the violence of them, to the continual consideration of the bitterness of our afflictions. All other comforts which may be thought on for the ease of their desolate souls are no more than enough to keep their minds in a perfect patience, amidst a world of so great miseries.

5. The fourth consideration. The souls do most perfectly love God, and they do penetrate, in a far more perfect manner than they could do in this life, the reasons (which are all most forcible) moving to love that infinite goodness. Wherefore, seeing themselves on the one side in an estate capable of enjoying God, and on the other debarred of enjoying Him (Whom they love so affectionately that it is a death to be separated from Him), their minds are, as it were, torn asunder on the rack of love. "Love is as strong as death. Jealousy as hard as hell, the lamps thereof

are fire and flames. Many waters cannot quench charity, neither can the floods drown."* Even in this world, where we have so little knowledge of God in our understanding, and where we follow this knowledge so faintly with our wills, some choice servants of God suffer strange things in this kind through the absence of their Beloved, though as yet they are not in an estate fit to enjoy Him. Father Baptista Sanctius, of the Society of Jesus, was one of these. For when he manifested his conscience unto his Superior, he professed he really was of opinion that very grief would kill him out of hand if he could come to know for certain that his life should be prolonged for the space of but one whole day, so truly strong as death was that love which inflamed his heart to the enjoying of his Beloved.† Few can believe, and fewer can understand this; but those who indeed love God see it with their eyes. If the ruthless moans of such true lovers deserve not compassion, there is no such thing as they call mercy in the world.

6. The fifth consideration. These souls know they are deprived of this infinite good (which they so ardently love) for no other cause but their own fault, their own carelessly committed sins; sins which did offend and affront this infinite goodness, which now they love so tenderly. And this it is which cutteth as deep as the sharpest edge of grief can cut into the softest heart, which weepeth with tears of blood as often as it thinks (and it can never cease from

* Cant. viii. 6, 7.

† Ludov. de Ponte, *Vita P. Baltas.*, cap. xvii.

thinking) that it was not only a trifle which separated it in this manner from God, but a wickedness abominable in His sight, an offence of such an Excellency, a contempt of such a Majesty, a displeasure of such a Goodness, an ingratitude against such a Benefactor. Ah, this it is that goeth to their very heart; this all the powers of their souls bewail, and lament to the uttermost of their power, with tears which neither can nor will admit of comfort until due satisfaction be made, even to the least and last farthing.

7. The sixth and last consideration differeth in this from the former, that as these souls are tormented with such unspeakable grief whilst they ponder the miseries of this banishment for their own offences, as they are displeasing to Him Whom they so purely love; so they are also put on a new torture, when out of natural love unto themselves (which now well-ordered charity doth much increase) they attentively consider and deeply penetrate what it is to be deprived of such a good, such a joy, such a bliss, for such a small, such a no good, such a mischievous evil as they sinned for, a pleasure so vain, so short, so ugly, so irrational, and so pernicious to their souls; and yet, to use their language, such was my folly (ah, wretch, not only miserable but mad!) as to forego even such a good, for such a bare, such a shameful, such a pestiferous trifle as that was; so many degrees of glory, which would have made me so happy for all eternity, are wholly and irrecoverably lost for a pure (ah, most impure) nothing! How often was I inspired to do this thing, and yet, &c. These, and far more miserable than these, be the anguishes of those souls,

far greater than either those of Esau selling his birthright for a mess of pottage, or those of Adam for making away Paradise for the taste of an apple, or any other this world ever had, or shall have.

8. Sum up now in thy mind all these considerations together, and think in what a sea of sorrows that heart must be into which day and night so great and so many floods do unlade their waves; and canst not thou find in thy heart to afford them some slight relief? "He that hath the substance of this world, and shall see his brother in need, and shall put up his bowels from him, how doth the charity of God abide in him?"* He saith not, how doth the charity towards his neighbour, but how doth the charity of God remain in him? And if thou, whosoever thou art, thus shuttest thy bowels in a necessity, as extreme almost as a necessity can be, of thy own and Christ's brother, I am sure that the charity of thy neighbour hath no place in thee. But as for charity towards God, it is not I, but St. John, who doth, as it were denying, ask, "How doth the charity of God remain in thee?"

* 1 St. John iii. 17.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

THE THIRD MOTIVE, TAKEN FROM THE LONG TIME
THAT THESE PAINS DO ENDURE.

IF these pains were to be ended in a short space, our hard-heartedness might then have some excuse; but (speaking still of what happeneth for the most part) it is a thing scarce to be doubted of, that they continue very long; for the holy Church is accustomed to keep the anniversaries of those who died a hundred or two hundred years ago. Whence it appeareth that there is reason to fear that many have a long stay in Purgatory. The learned Bellarmine* doth recount some histories very authentical (as he excellently proveth) out of which appeareth that divers souls are condemned to Purgatory even till the Day of Judgment. And Tertullian, one of the ancient Fathers, speaking of these pains of Purgatory, saith, "Thou shalt not depart perhaps until the day of thy resurrection."†

2. Now, if we require why God doth hold this manner of proceeding, in rather detaining us a long time in our punishments than in adding to the bitterness of our torments that which is taken out in length of time, we can divine no other reason than that our sins have deserved this misery also, and men would little apprehend to suffer all that could be suffered in one moment, if the next moment they were to be eternally happy; and therefore God, Who in His

* *De Gemit. Columb.*, cap. ii. † *De Anima*, cap. xvii.

severe judgment had a merciful regard to that which would work most with our dull apprehensions, did ordain that (as St. Augustine speaketh)—“So great as the matter of our sins shall have been, so long should be the stay of our passage.”* The best way, therefore, to make us have some conceit of the long continuance of these pains, is to see how great the matter uses to be on which they feed; that is, what a kind of quantity the sins of men use most commonly to amount unto.

3. A little arithmetic will give us a great insight in this matter. The just man is said to sin seven times a day, wherefore we may easily allow thrice more a day to one of those whom we call good and honest men, such as the world hath but few of; such a man, therefore, as this is, doth sin (venially) ten times a day, taking one day with another. The days in a whole year are three hundred and sixty-five; wherefore he who every day sinneth ten times, must at the year's end have sinned ten times as often as there be days in a year; which sum is easily found out by only putting one cypher to the number of the days in the the year, which are 365; add now one cypher, and we shall have 3,650. So that the sins of this good man, even in one year, come to no less than three thousand six hundred and fifty. But if this honest man should live, even in this good manner, ten years, he should at ten years' end have committed the former sum ten times, because he doth double it every year; which sum also is easily had by adding one cypher to the

* “Quanta fuerit peccati materia, tanta esset transeunti mora” (*Hom.* xv., ex l. hom.).

former sum of 3,650, which, if we do, we do find 36,500. What a thing is this? An innocent man—not a man, but a youth—doth commit thirty-six thousand and five hundred sins, all in ten years; wherefore, if the youth should for ten years more continue this his virtuous course of life, he would double the sins of his former life, and make them amount to seventy-three thousand before he came to be a middle-aged man. “Oh,” saith St. Augustine, “perhaps when thou dost consider a little sin apart, and by itself, thou dost slight it; yet,” saith he, “if thou contemnest thy little sins when thou dost weigh them, yet tremble when thou dost number them.”*

4. Let us reflect now a little, before we go any further, what a kind of Purgatory this man—a man not fully of middle age, a man very pious, a man who never committed one mortal sin—would be liable unto if he should die at this age; for, perhaps, of those seventy-three thousand sins he hath not fully satisfied for the odd three thousand, or if he hath he hath done more than most men use to do, for of all miseries one of the greatest is that those who sin most have least care to satisfy for their sins. Now what a Purgatory, think you, seventy thousand sins will deserve? “Thy judgments (O God) are a deep bottomless pit.”†

5. But why put we a case which so seldom happens? The ordinary course of man is to commit many and enormous mortal sins, and venial without

* “Si contemnis quando appendis, expavesce, quando numeras”
(*In Epist. Joan.*, tract. i.).

† Psalm xxxv.

all scruple, and consequently without all number. Yea, many hold on this strain until they come to be very old, and unable by reason of their years, and unwilling by reason of their ill habits, to do any penance ; and so they content themselves with spending some few hours to deplore and confess those sins, which amount to far more thousands than there be minutes in the hours which they spend in lamenting them. Consider now how insufficient the grief of one minute is to cancel out all the pains due to a whole thousand of sins, and many of them very enormous.

6. There is also another thing in this reckoning to be much reflected on—that he who should have but one only mortal sin would be liable, after the forgiveness of it, to a punishment far different (and God knows how far) from that which he is liable unto who hath only venial sins to satisfy for, though their number be exceeding great ; for if one mortal sin, before it be forgiven, be liable unto an eternity of punishment, and most bitter punishment—and, consequently, to such a punishment as all the venial sins a man can commit would never deserve the hundred thousand part of it—I will leave it to a right valuing judgment to esteem how much more pain God is like to impose upon him who hath this one forgiven mortal sin to satisfy for, than on him who hath only venial sins, and those also forgiven, to satisfy for, though the number of them should be exceeding great. Well, then, if one mortal sin bringeth with it such a dreadful Purgatory, how are they like to be dealt withal who every day run upon the score, and thus continue not

for many days but years together, during which time, they being always in sin, never make satisfaction for the least they commit. If holy David said—"My iniquities have overtaken me, and I was not able to see them (they were so many): they are multiplied above the hairs of my head,"* what may these men ("who drink up iniquity like water"†) think of the multitude of their sins, who perhaps have a hundred for David's one? Such like considerations as these made the devout St. Bonaventure cry out—"I have sinned above the number of the sands of the sea. How then shall I number that which is without number? How shall I suffice, when I shall be enforced to pay my debt to the very last farthing?"‡

7. But let us mark a little what satisfaction is usually made by those that stand in so great need of it. The ordinary ways to satisfy be these—fasting, prayer, and alms-deeds, and sometimes by indulgences; and all these things must be done in the state of grace, in which these men are seldom long together, and therefore most of these works (of which they do so few) come wholly to be lost, but when they are not thus cast away, let us see what they will come to. As for fasting, when it cannot be shifted of by any pretence, fast they do, but God knows how many times they lose either the whole or the greater part of this good work; for they have so many inventions to sweeten their fasts, with such variety of dainty dishes, that it is much to be feared lest, in place of satisfying for their old sins, they commit new

* Psalm xxxix. 13.

† Job xv. 16.

‡ *In Parvo Bono.*

sins of gluttony, which require a new satisfaction. Now, for prayer, it is commonly performed by them with so many distractions, irreverences, and other imperfections, that the world may seem not to go amiss, if there be enough of their prayers made so well, that it may suffice to make due recompense for that which is made so ill. Alms-deeds the poor cannot give and the rich will not, for they do live, and mean ever to live, say what you will, at so high a rate, that they think they do a great matter if they can get enough honestly to maintain their bravery and to discharge their debts, for as for paying the debts they owe to God, they are resolved that He shall be paid last. Indulgences, indeed, are one of the great mercies of God, which in how great need we stand of, any man of judgment will see clearly by this whole discourse, but such is either the infidelity or strange carelessness of most men (especially of such as have most need), that perhaps the gross neglect of them may well be reckoned for one of the chief causes why many broil so long in the flames of Purgatory.

8. It is now high time to end this discourse, and I humbly and earnestly beseech the reader to take sometimes into his consideration the points mentioned, as well for his own spiritual profit as for the relief of his poor brethren's souls burning in Purgatory flames, and supplicating to his charity for succour by those affectionate words of St. Paul — "Remember them that are in bands, as if you were bound with them."*

* Heb. xiii. 3.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

THAT FOR THE LOVE WE BEAR TO GOD, WE OUGHT TO BE MUCH MOVED TO HELP THE SOULS IN PURGATORY.

HITHERTO we have only treated of such motives as charity towards our neighbour doth force upon us; now we will pass to the motives which pure charity towards God doth present unto us, and afterwards we will come to those motives which well-ordered charity towards ourselves doth offer us. To our present purpose, then. A soul which is enamoured on perfection, and desireth to please God in the highest manner, hath very many and efficacious motives to make her forward to aid the souls in Purgatory.

2. The first motive. God is of an excellency, worth, and perfection so infinite, that He deserveth all possible love and honour. This consideration maketh us cast about to see how we may procure that this Excellency may be more perfectly loved and glorified; wherefore, considering that on earth we know Him so imperfectly, and love Him so coldly, and glorify Him so meanly, we rest little satisfied with all which can be done by us on earth, and so we seek yet further, and consider how perfectly God is known by the Blessed in Heaven—how they love that Goodness, how they glorify that Majesty. Hence we burn with an ardent desire that God in this sublime manner be more known, loved, and honoured, and then, marking that it is in our power to procure this

by obtaining the delivery of some soul or souls out of Purgatory, which, being freed from thence by our means, would for ever love and honour God in that most perfect manner. Hence we break forth into those amorous words—"Bring my soul out of prison (O Lord), that I may praise Thy name."* And we bend ourselves wholly to procure the deliverance of these souls out of pure love to Almighty God.

3. The second motive. When we consider our infinite obligations to God for His manifold benefits showered down upon us, and being inflamed with a restless desire of showing ourselves truly grateful, though wholly unable, during the time of this mortal life, to thank Him as it is fitting, we use the best means we can devise to procure worthy thanks to be given Him by some soul or souls freed by our means, which both day and night may praise, extol, and thank this Divine Goodness.

4. The third motive. When we consider how great a Majesty, how infinite a Goodness, how great a Benefactor we have so often and so grievously offended, we feel in ourselves a strong and working desire of repairing this dishonour done to that Majesty, and cancelling our own ingratitude by the greatest honour we can invent to procure, and therefore we employ cheerfully our best good deeds in working the releasement of as many souls as we can, that, by their perpetual glorifying God, a more perfect recompense may be made for the dishonour we have done Him.

5. The fourth motive is drawn out of the precedent,

* Psalm cxli. 8.

put together in this manner. God, Whose excellency is so great, Whose goodness so infinite, Whose benefits so manifold, Whom I am obliged to satisfy for so many and so great sins—this God, I say, taketh all that is done unto His brethren for His sake as gratefully as if it were done unto Himself, as Christ hath taught us in plain words—“Amen I say to you, as long as you did it to one of these My least brethren, you did it to Me.”* How can I then hold myself from using any means by which I may perform a thing as grateful to my dear Lord as if He had endured the excessive torments of Purgatory and I had released Him? My heart is hard, but I must confess that this consideration doth make it yield, and if there were no argument but this, this alone might convince all men.

* St. Matt. xxv. 40.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

THAT BY OFFERING OUR ACTIONS FOR THE SOULS IN PURGATORY, WE PURCHASE MANY GREAT COMMODITIES FOR OURSELVES, AND SUSTAIN NO INCOMMODITY.

TO make this title good, I will show that by this devotion we do not merit less, but more. Secondly, that thus our actions are not less, but more impetratory. Thirdly, that thus we do not less, but more satisfy for our sins. Fourthly, that thus we have great hope of escaping either all or part of the pains of Purgatory. Fifthly, that thus we do nothing against charity towards ourselves; but that we should do against the perfection of this charity if we should not thus offer our actions for the souls in Purgatory. All these five points we will, by God's grace, endeavour to make clear in the next ensuing chapters, treating a part of every one of them in order in a peculiar chapter; and that all which hereafter we may have to say may be better understood, we will spend this present chapter in declaring how the business doth pass when we offer any works for the souls in Purgatory.

2. It is, therefore, most diligently to be noted, as the ground of all we are to say, that our virtuous actions may have these three several properties together. They may be meritorious, they may be impetratory, they may be satisfactory. They are meritorious when they are good works performed in the grace of God, having an eternal reward

promised unto them. They are impetratory, for they do obtain, besides the crown of justice which the just Judge layeth up for them against the day of His coming,* many other favours bestowed upon them by the bountiful hand of our merciful Father; as, for example, the life of our friend, as David hoped to obtain when he prayed and wept, and "kept a fast, and going in by himself lay upon the ground,"† to beg the life of his son; or the conversion of others, as the prayer made by St. Stephen did obtain of God the conversion of St. Paul,‡ as St. Augustine teacheth; in fine, "Ask, and it shall be given unto you."§ Our good works also are satisfactory, either always (as many excellent Divines hold) or (as all hold) if they be works of any labour, pain, or difficulty, as fasting, prayer, and alms-deeds; yea, what good works are there which our corrupted nature feeleth not difficulty in? Let us see what foundation this ground of our discourse hath in Holy Scripture.

3. That our good works are meritorious, is expressly taught in the sixth chapter of St. Matthew; and those good works are put by name, which make more to our purpose, to wit, fasting, prayer, and alms-deeds. The reward of which works we are there said to lose if we do them publicly, out of vanity; but if thou dost them in humble secrecy, "Thy Father, Who seeth in secret, will repay thee." And lest any man should think that only great works should be rewarded, our Saviour in plain terms doth tell us, that he who giveth but a cup of cold water shall not want

* 2 Timothy iv. 8. † 2 Kings xii. 16. ‡ Acts vii.

§ St. Luke xi. 9.

his reward, if it be done for His sake ; and we may see how mindful our Lord is of His promise, for in the Last Judgment Day, to those who shall have done such good works as these are, He will say, "Come, ye blessed of My Father, possess you the Kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry, and you gave Me to eat ; I was thirsty, and you gave Me to drink."* Mark how God doth give them Heaven for the doing of good works. "Possess," saith He, "the Kingdom. For you gave Me to eat, to drink," &c. And somewhat before in the same chapter—"Because thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will place thee over many things ; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."† Mark the causal—"Because thou hast been faithful." This is the cause for which Christ saith He giveth Heaven. Let Luther, let Calvin, let those who care for no good works, name what other cause they please.

4. That our good works are impetratory, that is, have virtue to move the liberality, goodness, and mercy of God, to bestow, in regard of them, the grant of many favours, when by prayer they are offered up for this end (for if they be not thus offered up, as they are joined and applied to this end by prayer, perhaps not any good works at all are impetratory, excepting only prayer itself : and not all prayer, but such as containeth some petition) ; that, I say, good works are impetratory, when they are thus joined with prayer, is evidently proved out of that fast of David, who with the prayer made for his son's life joined also other works of penance, lying on the ground, fasting,

* St. Matt. xxv. 34, 35.

† 21.

&c. "While the child," saith he, "was yet alive, I fasted and wept for him; but now that he is dead, why should I fast?"*

5. That our good works are satisfactory, that is, they (performed and dignified by grace granted through Christ's merits) have virtue to cancel sin, and the pains due to sin, is most clear in Scripture; and heretics, if loathness to make satisfaction for their sins did not blind them, cannot but see it. "Alms delivereth from death, and the same is that which purgeth away sins, and maketh to find mercy and life everlasting."† "Alms deliver from all sin, and from death, and will not suffer the soul to go into darkness."‡ "Water quencheth a flaming fire, and alms resisteth sins."§ In the eleventh chapter of St. Luke, our Saviour, speaking to the Scribes and Pharisees, saith that they shall be condemned in the Day of Judgment; that the blood of all the Prophets slain from the beginning of this world shall be required at their hands; and six times, one after another, He pronounceth woe against them; and to those unclean men, our Saviour at the very same time said, "But yet that which remaineth, give alms; and behold all things are clean unto you,"|| as sinful people as you are. "Wherefore let my counsel be acceptable to thee" (it is the most excellent counsel of the Prophet Daniel), "and redeem thou thy sins with alms, and thy iniquities with works of mercy."¶

6. This being thus declared, it may easily be understood how things do pass when we do offer

* 2 Kings xii. 22, 23. † Tobias xii. 9. ‡ Tobias iv. 11.
§ Eccclus. iii. 33. || St. Luke xi. 41. ¶ Daniel iv. 24.

up any work for the souls in Purgatory. For, first, the good work thus offered up is meritorious, and therefore we always merit by it; neither can we give this merit away, because reward is only due, and Scripture promiseth it to those only who shall have done well: wherefore we lose not the least parcel of the merit of good works if we do them for the souls in Purgatory—yea, we much increase it, as shall be showed. Secondly, the good work thus offered is impetratory, that is, it is apt to move God's mercy to grant that favour for obtaining of which it is offered up: as a happy death, peace among Christians, the long and happy life of our noble King, or such like things. Now the obtaining of all these requests is not the least hindered, but very much (as we shall show) furthered, though these works which we do be given to the souls in Purgatory, and offered up to God for the satisfaction of the pains due unto their sins not duly satisfied for. Thirdly, and lastly, this good work which we offer for the souls in Purgatory is satisfactory, and according to this satisfactory virtue which it hath (and not either as it is meritorious or impetratory) we do commonly apply it to the souls in Purgatory, because the thing which these poor souls stand most in need of, is making satisfaction for their sins not fully satisfied for; which satisfaction we make in their behalf, as holy Job did in the behalf of his sons when he offered daily sacrifices for their sins. How this is not against charity towards ourselves shall be declared hereafter. In the meantime ponder the words of Scripture—"A merciful man doth good unto his own soul."*

* Prov. xi. 17.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

THAT BY OFFERING OUR ACTIONS FOR THE SOULS IN PURGATORY, WE DO NOT MERIT LESS, BUT MORE.

THAT we do not merit less, is evident out of the last chapter; that we merit more than otherwise we should have done, if we had not applied these our actions to the souls in Purgatory, is taught by the Prince of Divines in these words—"The affection of charity in him who suffereth for his friend, doth make his satisfaction more pleasing to God than if he had suffered for his own self."* And it is certain, out of Holy Scripture, that charity doth add an exceeding worth and value to our least actions; for only charity it is which maketh a cup of cold water, given for Christ's sake, to be rewarded in the life to come. And only charity it was which made the poor widow's mite of greater price than the richest gifts.

2. Now, then, all meriting hath for reward some higher degree of celestial glory, which degree would not have been purchased without that meritorious work had been done; so that if there be two men, who before were of equal merits, and the one of them should give a cup of cold water more for Christ's sake than the other should give, this man for this so small a work should have a higher degree of glory than the other, and, consequently, he should see God for all eternity more perfectly and be for ever more happy

* St. Thomas, *Contra Gentes*, l. iii., cap. clviii.

than the other. So that, if we did truly love either God or ourselves, we should think all sufferings whatsoever, even those of Purgatory, to be a small price for the least degree of glory; for, indeed, the least is a good so great, that the suffering of never so long a Purgatory for purchasing it would not be so much as suffering a flea-bite to purchase the empire of the whole world. It would make a man bless himself to see how stark mad men are in neglecting such a good.

3. To our purpose then, I say, that by applying our actions to the souls in Purgatory, we do merit more than if we had not applied them to this end; and not only more, but very much more: and, therefore, though we did sustain many other and great inconveniences, yet they were all to be counted as nothing in comparison of these inestimable treasures of merit which by this devotion we purchase. St. Thomas saith excellent well—"Essential reward is infinitely better than the forgiveness of temporal pain;" so that though, by applying our satisfactions unto others, we should omit to gain for ourselves this forgiveness of temporal pain, yet we gain notably by the bargain if in place thereof we much increase our essential reward in everlasting glory. For this is an eternal good, a good infinitely better, than the forgiveness of temporal pain, as the Prince of Divines truly taught you. The causes which make this act of so high merit may be many; for, as we have showed in the fourth chapter, this devotion may be a work of most singular charity, most admirable gratitude, most rare contrition, most tender love towards our Lord and Saviour. But that which in a particular manner doth

raise the worth of this action, is the most ardent charity and pious mercy towards our neighbour, which here is so resplendent that it doth contain and surpass all and every one of those works of mercy which our Saviour esteems so dearly, that unto them by name He shall give the eternal possession of Heaven when He shall come to judge. For He shall say unto those who stand at the right hand—"Come, ye blessed of My Father, possess you the Kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry, and you gave Me to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave Me to drink; I was a stranger, and you took me in; naked, and you covered Me; sick, and you visited Me; in prison, and you came to Me."* This act, I say, both containeth and surpasseth all those works put together. For who relieveth a soul in Purgatory, though he giveth not a piece of bread to the hungry, yet he giveth the Food of life and the Bread of Angels to one who was tormented worse than death with the hunger of it. He giveth not a cup of cold water to the thirsty, but he giveth the Fountain of living water, Which runneth in to life everlasting, unto him whose thirst for it was so intolerable that no pain in the world can be compared to it. He doth not lodge a poor harbourless pilgrim in a barn for a night, but for the whole long day of eternity he lodgeth in the heavenly mansions a poor soul which wandered from this her home ever since her creation. He giveth not a few cast-off rags to clothe the naked, but he giveth the marriage-garment unto him who for want of it was cast for a time into

* St. Matt. xxv. 34—36.

outward darkness. He doth not give a comfortable visit to one that lieth sick of a burning fever, but him who burneth with Purgatory flames he carrieth to visit for ever God and His Angels. In fine, he doth not go to the imprisoned to afford them some small assistance, but he bringeth one out of the fiery dungeon of Purgatory into the liberty of the children of God.

4. Another cause there is which doth wonderfully exaggerate the worth of all these things, which followeth in the above-cited Scripture. For when the Blessed shall say, "Lord, when did we see Thee hungry, and fed Thee?"* our Lord shall answer them.—"Amen, I say to you, as long as you did it unto one of these My least brethren, you did it to Me."† Oh, what a reward shall he have of so liberal a Majesty, who hath done so grateful a service as the very freeing of Christ Himself from Purgatory (if so He could be liable unto it) would be. See what Christ said unto St. Gertrude.‡

5. The cause which may make the merit of this act to amount to an inconceivable greatness, is this, that those who are truly devoted to assist these souls, receive daily such copious showers of divine grace that, if they be not very backward in corresponding to them, they must needs go on daily increasing the treasures of their merits. For though many doubt whether the souls, whilst they remain in Purgatory, do pray for him by name who doth pray for them (because they, not seeing God, cannot know who they

* St. Matt. xxv. 37.

† St. Matt. xxv. 40.

‡ *Institut. Divin.*, l. v., cap. xxv.

are who pray for them), yet there seems to be all reason that they should make in a general manner incessant prayer to Almighty God to bless all those who shall pray for them; for this opinion is both pious and probable, as Suarez saith.* And Denis the Carthusian recounteth how that in a divine revelation, these words by a servant of God were heard to be uttered with the common voice of the souls in Purgatory—"O Lord God grant, out of Thy incomprehensible power, a hundred-fold reward to all those in the world who with their prayers do help us and lift us up towards the light of Thy Deity."† Howsoever, no man can doubt but when they come to Heaven they will, both day and night, as efficaciously as they can, recommend unto Almighty God the necessities of all those who were so charitable unto them as to obtain their deliverance out of their horrible torments, and to purchase for them the light of God, Whom to see one moment sooner they know now what a good it is.

6. What grateful heart, then, can ever forget such a benefactor, especially when without any labour at all, yea, with greatest pleasure and content, he can abundantly requite his charity. Ingratitude is a vice, and hath no place in Heaven. More grateful, therefore, questionless, will these souls be, most grateful will be all their friends, acquaintance, and kindred, their Angel Guardians and Patrons, yea, all the whole Court of Heaven, seeing that there is that perfect charity amongst the Blessed that every one of them is no less glad of his neighbour's good than he is of

* *De Orat.*, l. i., cap. ii. † *De Judic. Anim.*, circa finem.

his own ; and this action is incomparably more grateful unto them, in regard that the honour of the Divine Majesty is much increased, and our Blessed Saviour so singularly pleased by it, that it is as acceptable unto Him as if He Himself in Person had been the party delivered from the pains of Purgatory. The graces thus flowing down upon thee may be such that thou mayest come to owe thy salvation unto them ; as when, by these intercessions, some damnable temptation is borne off from thee which might have quite overthrown thee, or when, by their prayers, grace is given thee to become victorious against such dangerous temptations, or, if thou hast consented unto them, grace is by their entreaty given unto thee, to excite thee to most hearty and pure contrition. Thus, by labouring to help others from Purgatory, thou mayest help thyself to avoid hell ; and, by concurring to bring the souls of others to Heaven, thou mayest procure heavenly glory to thy own self. Thus "a merciful man doth good to his own soul."* If thou hadst a due feeling of the unspeakable evils of hell and inconceivable goods of Heaven, thou wouldst not a little esteem such a means as this is, so much helping to the avoiding of such an evil and obtaining of such a good. O my dear brother, deprive not these poor souls of their relief, thyself of these merits, the whole Court of Heaven of this joy, Christ of this comfort, God of this honour.

* Prov. xi. 17.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

THAT OUR ACTIONS, OFFERED UP FOR THE SOULS IN PURGATORY, ARE NOT LESS, BUT MORE IMPETRATORY OF OTHER FAVOURS.

FIRST I must entreat my reader to call to mind that which in the last chapter but one hath been said concerning the impetratory virtue of our actions, which, being applied to the souls in Purgatory according to their satisfactory virtue only, retain, notwithstanding, the self-same virtue to impetrate which they should have had though they had not been thus applied ; for as I satisfy for my sins by that very prayer by which I beg my daily bread, and the obtaining of this petition is nothing hindered by this satisfaction, so the work which satisfieth for the sins of others doth not become less apt to move the goodness of God to the grant of any favour, for obtaining of which this work may also be offered. Wherefore they are in an error who think that they must cast all other devotions aside, and neither pray for themselves nor for their friends, nor for their own private or the public necessities, if they follow our advice in praying, fasting, giving alms, and offering up their other good works for the souls in Purgatory—whereas all these things may be performed without the least hinderance to the obtaining of anything they can request ; for these works only, as they are satisfactory, may be applied for the relief of these souls, and as they are impetratory, they may be offered up for the obtaining of what we please.

2. True it is, that sometimes the very thing which we do desire and petition in our prayers is the relief of the souls in Purgatory, and we do actually crave, entreat, and beg for this; and unto this our so earnest request, we do join other works of fasting, alms-deeds, &c., to move the mercy of God to hear graciously this our petition; and then we need not wonder if our prayers, as they are impetratory, do not impetrate for us other favours, for we never did demand them. So when I pray for the health of my father, this prayer of mine doth not impetrate the health of my mother; and even as, when I pray for both the health of my father and my mother, this prayer of mine is not so efficacious to obtain the health of my father as it would have been made for that end only, and no other. So when I pray for other things, and also for the souls in Purgatory, this prayer of mine is not perhaps so efficacious to obtain those other things as it would have been if it had been made for those only, and for nothing else. I did say perhaps, for there be many reasons, as we shall see presently, for which prayer, thus made, becomes very efficacious for the obtaining those other requests which I desire to have granted, and which, perhaps, may further the grant of them far more than praying for them alone would do.

3. But for the present, let us suppose that such a prayer is less effectual for obtaining of other things; yet this ought not to make men more backward to pray for the souls in Purgatory, for shall I never pray for my mother because by the same prayer I obtain somewhat less for my father than I should have done

if I had prayed for him only? In the choice of these intentions for which we pray, we must regard many things, as the greater glory of God, the necessity of our neighbour, our own spiritual advancement, the common good of the Church, and the like. Now, perhaps, all things well considered, there will scarce be found any one thing which ought so dearly to be commended to our devotion as praying for the dead ; in the which, among other things, there is also this to be noted, that as St. Thomas saith, "God doth rather accept of prayers for the dead than for the living, because they not being able, as the living are, to help themselves, do more stand in need of the help of others."* To the which we may add a worthy consideration of St. Denis, the famous disciple of St. Paul,† to wit, that when we pray for the living, our prayer many times, as it is impetratory, obtaineth nothing at all, because the thing we pray for is not convenient to be granted, or because (to use his example) the sins of those we pray for do hinder this effect, as the sins of Saul did hinder that the prayers could not be heard in his behalf.‡ This in praying for the dead doth never take place ; for those who are departed in God's grace, as St. Augustine teacheth, "Deserved whilst they lived that these helps of prayers might profit them after their death."§ Whence as Bellarmine saith, "All Divines do agree that such suffrages as are generally offered up for all the dead do profit all of them. But they disagree about those suffrages which are offered up for some dead in

* Suppl., iii. sent. † *De Eccl. Hier.*, cap. vii., p. 5.

‡ 1 Kings xv. xvi.

§ *Enchir.*, cap. c.

particular.”* For Cardinal Cajetan† is of opinion that those who in this life took no care to relieve the souls of the dead, shall receive no benefit by such suffrages as their living friends offer up for them in particular. And the holy and learned Doctor Denis the Carthusian saith, “Those who have been slothful, and negligent, and hard-hearted in relieving the dead, must know that in the same measure that they have measured out to others, it shall be measured back unto them.”‡ If this opinion were true, they ought not a little to be affrighted who pass over so lightly all that belongs to the assistance of the dead. But the milder and contrary opinion is maintained by Bellarmine, and more commonly by all Divines. Wherefore prayer for the dead is never made without effect. Yet it is very good advice, when we offer up our prayers for any particular person, to offer them so that if such a person be not in need, or capable to be assisted by them, they may be accepted for the assistance of such others as may be relieved by them. The observing of this will make our charity still to have its full effect.

4. Let us come now to the reasons for which (as I began to insinuate) our prayers are far more impetratory when we remember the dead in them than when we omit this charitable remembrance. The first reason is, because this praying for the dead is an act of mercy so excellent that it doth in a supereminent manner contain and surpass all the corporal deeds of mercy put together, as hath been demon-

* *De Purg.*, cap. xviii. † *Opusc.*, t. i., tract. xvi., cap. xv.

‡ *De Judic. Animarum*, art. ult.

strated. Now there is no more efficacious means to stir up the mercy and liberality of God towards us, than the exercise of works of mercy and liberality. For as our Saviour saith, "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy."* And again, "In what measure you shall mete, it shall be measured to you again, and more shall be given to you."† Will you know how much more? St. Luke telleth you: "Good measure and pressed down and shaken together and running over shall they give unto your bosom."‡ With what words could the largeness of this measure have been more fully set forth? And, indeed, of so good a God we could expect no other; far be it from Him that our liberality should rather shut than open His hands. His deeds will ever prove His saying true, "Give, and it shall be given unto you," in the measure declared unto you in this very place.

5. And we may be the more confident of this particular act, because our Saviour taketh it as done unto Himself; and therefore doubtless as those souls which we have delivered cannot but be most ready to further any just petition which we shall make, so our dear Lord, Who counteth Himself to be the person released, will never be wanting in the furtherance of whatsoever we shall piously desire. Now, to have His good word so sure on our side must needs be of greater consequence for obtaining any reasonable favour than anything we can devise. And as far as my capacity can reach, I cannot conceive in what manner we may more efficaciously compass the grant of all our most important requests than by thus •

* St. Matt. v. 7. † St. Mark iv. 24. ‡ St. Luke vi. 38.

obliging (as I may say) Christ our Lord to speak in our behalf with that earnestness which we may imagine those souls to use whom we have relieved.

6. A further reason why our prayers, when we remember the souls of Purgatory in them, do become of far greater efficacy to obtain our requests, is this : Because (as hath been insinuated) this prayer, though of itself it hath not this greater efficacy, yet what it wanteth of itself, it procureth to be far more effectually performed by the help of those voices which it winneth, among which the first place is to be given to the Word Incarnate, Whose words cannot but be heard : "I knew that Thou hearest Me always," saith this our Lord.* The voices also of Heaven's whole Court cannot but join with the Word, both because their affections are united with an inseparable true lover's-knot, and because there is not one in Heaven who thinketh not himself to have particular interest in the furtherance of this cause ; for all that blessed mansion love the soul released even as they love their souls. For as St. Austin saith, "There nobody loveth another less than himself. Whence every one doth not otherwise rejoice at each one's good than at his own."† And consequently all and every one of them will be in a manner as forward to assist us as those souls will be who were released by our prayers. And who can express how ready these souls will be who were released by our prayers. And who can express how ready these souls released, or relieved by us, are to help us in all occurrences ? Tell me now, what means can you invent more

* St. John xi. 42.

† *Manuali*, xxxv.

efficacious to make, in a manner, sure whatsoever you request.

7. Behold here a most admirable manner of communication, which we living in the Church militant may keep with our brethren, both belonging to the Church patient in Purgatory and triumphant in Heaven; so obliging, and so gratifying them, and each one of them, that we come to have as many, and as powerful intercessors to promote all our just requests, as Heaven hath citizens. Art not thou then, dear Christian, of my mind, that in order to obtain any favour for ourselves, or for any other, there is scarce any means so effectual as to be still assistant to these suffering souls, by procuring sacrifices, by offering prayers, fasts, and alms-deeds for them? The Rev. Father Alexis de Salo, thus writeth of himself: "One of my particular devotions is, whensoever I desire to obtain any particular favour for myself, or any other, to say some few prayers for the dead. And I assure you, I have experienced in myself and others strange effects."* For my part, I have seen, and by most credible relations heard, so many apparent examples to confirm this practice, that no sophistry of never so subtle disputants shall dispute me out of it. This experience quite blunts their sharpest weapons. Though if we were to come to disputing, I hold myself to have said enough both here and in the first part.† I cannot, therefore, but recommend the devotion which many use, who being to undertake long and troublesome journeys, do willingly undergo this difficulty, to the end that

* Alexis de Salo, pt. i., 62.

† Chap. xxiv., nn. 6—10.

they may make, as it were, as many pilgrimages as day's-journeys, for the relief of those souls in whose behalf they daily offer up the labour and toil of each day's travel, which by this devotion becomes more sweet and prosperous. But that the least occasion of the least error may not be given by what I write, I have thought fit to speak here a short word of two questions, very commonly demanded.

8. The first question is, Whether we are to implore the aid, help, or intercession of such souls as are still in Purgatory. And I make choice to answer by recounting unto you what hath been delivered by two of the greatest personages of this latter age. The first is Cardinal Bellarmine. "It is not incredible but that the souls in Purgatory do pray and impetrate for us; for Dives in hell* prayed for his brothers when he was in greater torment than those in Purgatory."† Yet, I pray, note well what follows: "But though these things be true, yet commonly it seems superfluous to beg of them to pray for us. Because they have no ordinary means to know what we do in particular. But they have only in general this knowledge, that we are in many necessities. Neither is it likely that ordinarily they have revelations concerning what we do, or what we ask of them." Thus far Bellarmine. Let us now hear the other great Doctor, which is Suarez, writing thus of the souls in Purgatory. "If they know not our prayers, it seems an idle and superfluous thing to pray to them. Yet I add that it is not certain that they do not know our prayers. And it is not incredible but that they are made:

* St. Luke xvi. 27, 28 † *De Purgatoria*, l. ii., cap. xvii.

known to them by their Guardian Angels, or else by our Angels. For this is not a thing above their state. And this is an act suitable to the office of the Angel keepers. Wherefore if any one should find fruit and devotion in this manner of prayer, he seems not to be dissuaded from it." But, good reader, pass not over these his following words without taking special notice of them. "Although," saith he, "this manner of prayer seems not necessary, because devotion towards the souls in Purgatory is more manifested by aiding and assisting them by satisfactory works done in their behalf, and by praying for them. And this suffices to move them to pray for us, when and after what manner they shall be able according to the divine ordination."* This seems the very best decision of this question. If the heir-apparent to a great kingdom were held captive by his enemies, and left in cruel torments by them, from which, either by some convenient advice, or device, I were able to relieve him, think you not that I should far sooner deserve his favour and assistance in all things by affording him my seasonable help rather than in employing my hands to present an unseasonable petition unto him to be assistant unto me. These who are now in Purgatory be heirs-apparent to the Kingdom of Heaven, though their offences (which be their greatest enemies) have left them for a time abandoned to insufferable torments. If we desire, indeed, to obtain and deserve their best aid and help, let us rather be now aiding and helping unto them, by most seasonable prayers for them, than become unseasonable

* *De Orat.*, l. i., cap. x.

petitioners unto them. Moreover, by thus affording them relief, rather than by begging relief of them, I shall win the favour of their Angel keepers, their patrons and friends in Heaven, and Christ Himself, with all those blessed Spirits, as the prealleged reasons do convince.

The second question is, Whether souls in Purgatory pray for the living? Bellarmine, above cited, supposes that they pray for us in a general manner; which opinion is accounted both "pious and probable" by Suarez, above cited. And he declares it very well to our purpose. "They may pray," saith he, "for all such as pray for them, or who do anything advancing their deliverance. For that prayer is for such persons as God knows in particular, though these souls do not. They may therefore beg of God that He would be pleased to succour them, to forgive their sins (by stirring them to contrition), to take temptation away from them, and do them such like favours as these are."* And whosoever shall well ponder it, he will find these favours to be such as may extraordinarily conduce towards our eternal salvation, as we said in the end of the sixth chapter. Yea, by this means we may come also to obtain all those our pious requests, to further which we did betake ourselves to offer up some peculiar devotions for the souls in Purgatory. For whilst these souls, all of them, are so frequently, and as it were incessantly, begging that God would graciously grant all that piously shall be demanded of Him, whether it be for themselves or for others, by all such as shall be their special benefactors, the Divine

* Chap. xi.

Mercy, by so fervent, by so just, by so incessant prayers, of so many and so good friends of His, is sweetly drawn to condescend to their request. "For why should not this be their request," saith Suarez, "seeing that this is an act of charity and gratitude?" Whence with the same Doctor I conclude, "that we have from hence sufficient ground to be always well-doing to these souls, to the end that we may the more be made partakers of their prayers."

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

THAT BY OFFERING OUR ACTIONS FOR THE SOULS IN PURGATORY, WE DO NOT LESS, BUT MORE SATISFY FOR OUR OWN SINS.

NOW we come to that point which only hath difficulty in this matter; for it may seem clear, that when we give away to others the fruits of our own satisfaction, we cannot enjoy these fruits ourselves, no more than we can pay our debts with the same money which we pay for the debts of our friends. This difficulty is very solidly answered by saying that which is most true, to wit, that to pray for and assist the souls in Purgatory, is an act so highly meritorious of grace and glory, an act so impetratory of such things as may be eternally beneficial to our own souls, that the loss of the fruit of our satisfactions is nothing to be valued in regard of the gain which we purchase, as may appear by what hath been said before.* A second and sufficient answer might be, that this loss

* Chap. vi., nn. 2, 3.

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may fully be repaired by the gaining of indulgences for ourselves. So, though I cannot pay my own debts with the same money which I pay out for the debts of my friends, yet I may, by favour, procure a release-ment of my own debts, and so be as free from them as if I had paid them with that money which I liberally laid out to discharge my friend's debt. That such favours or indulgences may be obtained, we will prove at large in the twelfth chapter.

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2. But these two answers being for the present let pass, I intend to make good the title of this chapter, and to show that this devotion is a rare kind of satisfaction. For understanding of which it is much to be noted, that when we do any good work for the souls in Purgatory—for example, when we fast, or pray, or give alms for them—we have such a kind of act as this is: I do offer this fast, this prayer, this alms, for such a soul, or such souls in Purgatory. The thing, therefore, which we give away is only such a fast, prayer, or alms, and of the fruit of this work, as it is satisfactory, we wholly deprive ourselves, and consequently, as it is satisfactory, it maketh no satisfaction for our sins, but only for their sins for whom we did offer it: yet that act, by which I, offering this fast for another, deprive myself of the fruit thereof, redoundeth wholly to my profit; neither doth any part of it benefit any one but myself. Now I affirm that with this act, by which, with so great charity to God and my neighbour, I give away this fast, this alms, and prayer, I do both satisfy for my sins, and satisfy in no mean manner, but in a manner far more excellent than is ordinarily conceived.

3. For, first, this is an act most meritorious, and consequently most satisfactory. For, as the learned Vasquez teacheth,* Every good work, for the self same cause for which it doth deserve to be rewarded in Heaven, deserveth also freedom from such impediments as may hinder the enjoying of this reward; such an impediment as the being in Purgatory would be. Moreover, the more that we by our good deeds do endear ourselves to the Divine Majesty, the more we do recompense any former displeasure done unto Him. Grateful services cannot but abolish old offences. Hence also Divines of prime note do aver that all good acts are in the self-same degree satisfactory in which they are meritorious. So saith Victoria, Soto, Ledesma, &c. Now we have demonstrated that this act is in a very high degree meritorious, and therefore, by consequence, it must be in a very high degree satisfactory.

4. But let us consider a little more this act by itself. First, it cannot but be hard and laborious to corrupted nature to be willing to fast for another: and if this be not very difficult, why do you hold back so much, seeing it may be so beneficial unto you? If you find no difficulty, because your charity towards your neighbour is such that with joy you can do all these things for his sake, this pious disposition of yours doth not lessen, but increase the satisfactory virtue of this act. For as, excellently, St. Thomas—"The lessening of the pain, which proceeds from the readiness of the will caused by charity, doth not diminish, but increase the efficacy of our satisfaction."†

* Pt. ii., q. 94, d. 5, n. 3.

† Suppl., q. 15, a. 1.

5. Again, this is an act of rare charity towards God, Whose glory we advance by thus procuring the increase of His honour, done to Him in Heaven by the souls we release; and towards our neighbour, to whom we procure the greatest good that may be. Now, as Konincke saith—"Not a few, but all Divines do teach, that by an act of charity produced with never so much ease and delight, a man may satisfy for all the pains he hath deserved."* The Scripture telleth us as much—"Many sins are forgiven her, because she hath loved much."† "Above all things having continually mutual charity among yourselves, for charity covereth a multitude of sins."‡ And if this be not enough, "Charity covereth all sins."§

6. Lastly, this act is one of the chiefest deeds of mercy, surpassing all the works of corporal mercy put together; and therefore, questionless, it is an act most highly satisfactory: for if of all corporal alms it be written that they free from sin and death, and do not suffer the soul to go into darkness;|| that they resist sin, as water doth the burning fire;¶ that if you "give alms, behold all things are clean unto you.** What shall we think of this spiritual alms, by which Heaven is given, and Purgatory pains forgiven to a poor soul, made of a most pitiful prisoner, a most glorious Saint. What a work of mercy is this? Of the works of mercy in general, St. Thomas saith—"The works of spiritual mercy are so much more excellent than the works of corporal mercy, by how much the soul is more noble

* *De Sacram.*, dis. x. ; *De Satisf.*, d. 4.

† St. Luke vii. 47. ‡ St. Peter iv. 8. § Prov. x. 12.

|| Tobias iv. ¶ Eccles. iii. ** St. Luke xi. 41.

than the body.”* By this it appeareth, that all those who exercise these works of charity and spiritual mercy frequently (as all do, who do much for the souls in Purgatory) are so far from depriving themselves of all satisfaction, that as often as they give their satisfactory works away, they heap up great treasures of satisfaction: so that here that which the Scripture saith in the Proverbs is perfectly verified—
“Some distribute their own goods, and grow richer.”†

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

THAT BY OFFERING OUR ACTIONS FOR THE SOULS IN PURGATORY, WE HAVE GREAT HOPE OF ESCAPING EITHER ALL OR A GOOD PART OF PURGATORY.

THE proof of this title may be in part drawn out of the preceding chapters; for, this act being so eminent, if we regard merit, and so effectual, if we regard impetration, may with good ground be thought partly to deserve, as it is meritorious, partly to obtain by the way of favour, as it is impetratory, that our merciful Lord should deal more mildly than the ordinary course of justice exacts with all those who have both made a most noble kind of satisfaction for their own sins, and have, with a most heroical charity, done many worthy actions to satisfy for the sins of others: neither is there wanting many convenient

* ii., 5, q. 3, a 2.

† Prov. xi. 24.

reasons to persuade us to have this honourable conceit of the Divine Goodness.

2. The Holy Scripture itself gives us good ground to build this opinion. "Charity covereth a multitude of sins." And yet more clearly—"Charity covereth all sins." And what charity more eminent than this?—"Alms deliver from all sin, and from death, and will not suffer the soul to go into darkness."* "Give alms, and behold all things are clean unto you." Now if these prerogatives are to be granted to alms-deeds when they are plentiful (which I add because St. Chrysostom saith—"Not to give, but to give plentifully, is an alms-deed"†); if, I say, alms-deeds be thus privileged, being a mere work of corporal mercy, what shall we think of this alms, so incomparably surpassing all corporal works of mercy? For it relieveth a greater misery than any corporal necessity can be, and it bestoweth a gift no less than the possession of God Himself. Shall such an alms permit the giver of it to go into darkness? No; this alms also will make all clear: for "He that giveth to the poor, shall not want."‡ He shall not sustain this necessity, the most grievous a poor soul can be in, because, as holy David saith, "Blessed is he that understandeth concerning the needy and the poor: the Lord will deliver him in the evil day."§ He shall be delivered in that day, which to others is so evil.

3. And, indeed, how can we think otherwise? For be not these our Saviour's words—"Amen I say

* Tobias iv. 11.

† "Non dare, sed copiosè dare, eleemosyna est."

‡ Prov. xxviii. 27.

§ Psalm xl. 1.

to you, as long as you did it to one of these My least brethren, you did it to Me.”* Now, if our Saviour taketh the delivery of the souls of His brethren as gratefully as if His own Soul had been freed from Purgatory, what shadow of likelihood is there that He will not procure the delivery of him whom He acknowledgeth to have been as His own deliverer? Who of us can have the heart—and our hearts are hard enough; yet who of us can have the heart—to let Him lie roasting in Purgatory flames Who hath freed us from this misery, especially if we could effect His releasement as easily as our Saviour can work ours, even without breach of the very rigour of justice; to wit, by offering in our behalf His superabundant satisfactions for the supply of such satisfaction as we stand in need of; that is, to bestow for His own sake a plenary indulgence upon us; which, though it be a favour extraordinary, yet the motive to grant it beareth proportion with such a grant; and to Him Who hath showed so extraordinary charity, liberality, and mercy, it ought not to seem strange if extraordinary charity, liberality, and mercy be showed by Him, Whose bowels are made all of charity, bounty, and compassion: for if in punishing, God observeth this rule, “By what things a man sinneth, by the same also he is tormented;”† “As he hath done, so shall it be done to him; breach for breach, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, shall he restore;”‡ may we not justly think that, in matters of favour, He doth show greatest mercy to him who hath showed greatest mercy to others? What other sense have those words, “Blessed

* St. Matt. xxv. 40. † Wisdom xi. 17. ‡ Lev. xxiv. 19, 20.

are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy"?* Wherefore, "As he hath done, so shall it be done to him." As he hath offered his satisfactions for the releasement of Christ's brethren, so Christ will offer up His superabundant satisfaction for the releasement of his soul. Soul for soul shall be repaid to him; ransom for ransom. As he hath freed others, so he shall be freed himself. Very rational are the words of Abimelech to Abraham, "According to the kindness that I have done to thee, thou shalt do to me."†

4. We must here overslip, in a cursory manner, that evident text of Scripture, which doth almost demonstrate that which we have said—"Give, and it shall be given unto you;"—but mark well in what measure—"Good measure and pressed down and shaken together and running over shall they give into your bosom."‡ The thing which we did give, was the fruits of our satisfactions, for supply of our brethren's want, by which gift he was released. Wherefore, that our Lord may return us equal measure, as great wants of ours must be supplied by the fruits of His superabundant satisfactions: but that this measure be a "good measure and pressed down and shaken together and running over," we may expect to be, in that over liberal measure, made partakers of Christ's satisfactions, that by them, our debts being to the last farthing wholly discharged; or an act of perfect contrition, or charity, being by His gracious gifts bestowed upon us, we may pass without impediment to the reward of our charity.

5. To all these so well-grounded reasons, we will

* St. Matt. v. 7. † Gen. xxi. 23. ‡ St. Luke vi. 38.

add, for a conclusion, the certain assistance which infallibly in this our necessity will be afforded us by all those whom we have either released or relieved : and not only all these happy souls, but also all and every one of their blessed kindred, Guardian Angels, Patrons, &c., will favour us in our death, to requite the favour by which we obliged them in our life : so that many of the Saints, by their intercessions, and some by offering up their superabundant satisfactions, will so prevail with the mercy of God, that we need not much fear, all helps being put together, to be long left forlorn in the flames of Purgatory.

6. And lest, perhaps, this fear might have some little place left in any man's heart, it hath pleased the Divine Goodness, by word of mouth, to confirm all we have said. St. Gertrude was one of the most renowned Saints for virtue, and one of the most wonderful Saints for the miraculous favours which daily were done unto her that the Church hath had. This blessed Saint (as Denis the Carthusian relateth) did with an admirable affection, give all and every of her actions wholly unto the souls in Purgatory, not reserving for herself the least fruit of her satisfactions. Coming, therefore, to die, she began not a little to be afflicted, for fear lest, that having many sins to satisfy for, and having left herself destitute of all her satisfactory works, she might be liable to grievous punishments. But Christ Himself did vouchsafe to comfort her with these words—"That thou mayest understand how grateful that charity of thine hath been unto Me, which thou didst show towards the souls, I do even now forgive thee all those pains which thou shouldst

have suffered. And I, Who for one have promised a hundred-fold, will now show My liberality, and I will heap up glory upon thee."

7. This comfort may they expect, who have showed the like mercy towards the souls of their brethren ; but those who have slighted this devotion as superstitious, or fit only for old wives, may justly fear to have those dreadful words spoken unto them—"Judgment without mercy to him that hath not done mercy."*

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

THAT IT IS NOT AGAINST CHARITY TO OURSELVES TO
OFFER OUR ACTIONS FOR THE SOULS IN PURGATORY,
BUT IT IS RATHER AGAINST IT NOT TO OFFER THEM.

THE common and the only objection which any Catholic can make against this liberality towards the souls in Purgatory is this: That though our prayers, or other good works, offered up to God for the souls in Purgatory, be equally, or rather more, both meritorious and impetratory than otherwise they would have been, yet it cannot be denied but that they do not satisfy for our own sins ; which, seeing that they be many and great, the pains due unto them will be excessive ; and, therefore, if our charity were well ordered, we would not so forget ourselves as to leave ourselves in this manner deprived of those satisfactions, for want of which we shall be liable to these torments, which be

* St. James ii. 13.

so very terrible. This objection I have deferred to this place, because now the answers unto it, out of that which hath been said, will be most clear.

2. I answer then, first, that though we did become liable to these and greater pains, yet they were not so much to be esteemed as a flea-bite for gaining of a kingdom, if by this our charity towards the souls we might increase (as we do most highly increase) the crown of our eternal glory.* I answer secondly, that by the gaining of indulgences we may prevent this pretended incommodity, as we shall prove at large in the eleventh chapter.

3. Thirdly, I give this direct and clear answer, that though by the works we do for the souls we do satisfy only for their, and not at all for our own sins, yet by that rare act of charity, by which we give these works away unto them, we do satisfy in a most high degree, as hath been proved in the eighth chapter; yea, in a degree so high, that by this satisfaction (and other helps, as we did demonstrate in the last chapter) we have great hope in escaping either all, or greatest part, of Purgatory: yea, by this devotion we may escape hell itself, as we have before declared.†

4. To conclude this chapter. In a word, it is nothing against well-ordered charity towards ourselves to help these souls as much as we can; but it needs must be against perfection of this charity not to assist them to our full power, for that we lose the merit of so rare a charity, and the loss of this merit is a loss of the more perfect sight of God for ever. What a loss is this, dear brother—what a loss is this!

* See chap. vi., n. 2.

† Chap. vi., n. 6.

Remember what we said out of St. Thomas,* “That our essential bliss” (which consists in the fruition of God, of which we are made more abundantly partaker by having exercised more abundant charity to our neighbour) “is infinitely better than the forgiveness of temporal pain;” which, notwithstanding, is the chiefest good, which those niggards aim at who pretend so much charity to themselves. They understand not that true charity to themselves consists in the real desiring, and effectual procuring, their own good. Those do not do this, who, fixing their eyes only upon that temporal good which consists in purchasing forgiveness of the temporal pain due to their sins, omit to procure that which “is infinitely better than this forgiveness”—that is, they omit to purchase a more eminent degree in fruition of essential beatitude, by being made partakers of which they might have known, honoured, loved, and enjoyed God for a whole eternity, in a far more perfect manner than now they shall. A good, so far surpassing the forgiveness of all temporal pain in Purgatory, that there is not one of the Saints in Heaven who would not willingly undergo the temporal pains of a thousand Purgatories, if, by the undergoing of them, he might notably increase his essential glory in beatifical vision and fruition; as we may do, exercising these most meritorious acts of charity in relieving the souls in Purgatory, which, how much they conduce to our advancement in essential beatitude, hath been largely declared in the sixth and seventh chapters.

5. I have yet one short question of these provident

* Chap. vi., n. 3.

self-seekers of their own commodity, whether they do conceive, that by reserving all the benefits of their satisfactory works to themselves only, without bestowing any part upon the souls of their distressed brethren, their satisfactions will so abound, as to suffice for the full payment of all their debts to God, even to the last farthing. Surely you little understand the greatness and multitude of your offences, and hugely overvalue your own works, if you think you have no reason to fear a very fearful account in Purgatory. But, as I proved in the former chapter, those whose charity hath been eminent in relieving the souls of their departed brethren, may have justly great hopes of avoiding all, or a very great part, of their Purgatory pains: so that the forgiveness of temporal pains in Purgatory, which you esteem so great a good, may sooner be purchased by this devotion, together with a far more eminent degree in essential beatitude, which is a good so infinitely surpassing the former. Wherefore, if we be indeed true lovers and seekers of our own commodity, here is enough spoken unto us.

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

BY WHAT MEANS WE MAY HELP THE SOULS IN
PURGATORY.

IF God hath done us the favour to soften our hearts, we shall not now desire any new motives, but rather seek by what means we may chiefly relieve these poor souls. For those who are thus disposed, we will declare what is to be done in this matter.

2. That which, in the first place, ought to be recommended is, that if they will indeed benefit either their own souls, or satisfy for the souls of their neighbours, they must put themselves in a state of grace: for a dead member can neither help the body of which it is a member, nor anybody else. And St. Paul saith, "If I should distribute all my goods to feed the poor, and if I should deliver my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing."* This supposed,

3. The ordinary means of relieving the dead are these: prayer, fasting, and alms-deeds. As for prayer for the dead, it is instituted by the Apostles themselves, as we proved in the first part, and so esteemed by the Holy Church, that at the end of every hour of Divine Office, she teacheth us to pray that the souls of the Faithful may rest in peace; for she would not have us pray at any hour without remembering these afflicted souls in our prayers. It would make one wonder to see with what affection St. Austin, in the

* 1 Cor. xiii. 3.

last two chapters of his ninth book of his *Confessions*, doth pray for the soul of his mother; and not content with his own prayers, he doth earnestly crave and beg the prayers of all, in these fiery words—"Inspire, O Lord, inspire into Thy servants, that as many as shall read these things, may be mindful at Thy altar of Monica, Thy servant, that that which she did last of all request of me may be the more plentifully performed by the prayers of many."

4. But among all kinds of prayers there is none comparable to the Oblation of the dreadful Sacrifice of the Mass; for in this Sacrifice, the self-same Christ is offered, in an unbloody manner, upon the Altar, Who was offered in a bloody manner upon the Cross. So saith St. Ambrose—"We offer always one and the same Sacrifice, and not one Lamb to-morrow and another to-day, but always the same, one Christ is everywhere, here fully and there fully."* And again, "When we sacrifice, Christ is present, Christ is sacrificed."† For, as St. Austin saith, "The flesh of our Sacrifice is made the body of our Priest."‡ Wherefore that most ancient and glorious Martyr, St. Hippolitus, in his Oration, *De Consummatione Mundi*, bringeth in our Saviour thus speaking to our Priests—"Come you, who daily sacrifice My body and My blood." And Christ saith this to all Priests; for as, excellently, St. Chrysostom—"The sacred Oblation, what Priest soever offers it, is still the same: for men do not sacrifice this victim, but Christ Himself."§ Wherefore the victim which in this Sacrifice is offered, being true

* *In Hebr.* x.

† *In Luc.*, l. i., cap. i.

‡ *De Trin.*, l. iv., cap. xiv.

§ *Hom.* ii., in 2 *Tim.*

Christ, and the self-same Christ being Chief Priest, which by His Ministers and Substitutes doth sanctify and offer this victim, can any one wonder if all we Catholics, together with St. Cyril of Jerusalem, "do believe that the obsecration of that holy and dreadful Sacrifice which is placed on the altar, is the greatest help for the souls for which it is offered."* See this place at large; for nothing can be spoken more Catholicly.

5. The sacrifices of the Old Law were esteemed by the chief and only true believers of those times to have such virtue to relieve the dead, that when soldiers were slain in battle, they made a gathering of no less than "twelve thousand drachms of silver, and sent it to Jerusalem, for sacrifice to be offered for the sins of the dead."† What esteem, then, ought we to have of our Sacrifice? St. Austin deservedly praised his dead mother in these words—"She did not think how to have her body sumptuously buried, or embalmed, but she desired that her memory might be made at God's altar, at which she never omitted any one day of her life to be present, knowing that from thence is dispensed the Holy Host, or Sacrifice, whereby is blotted out the guilt of the world."‡ And this which she requested was fulfilled "when the Sacrifice of our price was offered for her,"§ as St. Austin saith it was.

6. This piety, which so flourished in the primitive Church, ceaseth not in the prime parts of the world to flourish in these our days. No less than one thousand seven hundred Masses, upon one and the self-same

* *Catech. Mystag.*, v.

† 2 Mach. xii. 43.

‡ *Confess.*, l. ix., cap. iii.

§ *Ibid.*, cap. xii.

day, were in Madrid celebrated at the funeral of Margaret, wife to Philip III. of Spain; and besides a thousand Masses, which this Queen by her will gave order to have said for her soul, the King, of his liberality, caused twenty thousand more to be said for her.* It is not very many years since the death of the Archduke Albertus, Prince of the Low Countries, whose pious wife, Isabel, did procure for the relief of his soul forty thousand Masses, and for thirty days together she herself did hear ten Masses daily for her pious lord and husband.†

7. As for fasting, most remarkable is that which we read in the Scripture, that after the death of Saul and his sons, the men of Jabes Galaad did take his dead body, and the dead bodies of his sons, and buried them in the woods of Jabes, and fasted seven days.‡ Under the name of fasts, all other mortifications and austerities are comprehended, as disciplines, hair-cloth, lying on the ground, &c. But because some men's silken ears cannot endure so hard language as the naming of these things, and others, under pretence of health, will plead inability to perform such works, I will add some few acts of mortification, which no man or woman can be too weak to exercise. For example, to debar themselves of some less necessary recreations, to abstain from some sweet morsels, for some small space to keep silence, not to see, not to hear such and such curiosities. But one act of virtue there is, which the weakest creature in the world may practise; and it is an act of so high worth, that the strongest

* Gusman, *Vita Margar. Austriac*, cap. iii., p. 3.

† P. F. Jac. Curvoisier, *Mausolæo*. ‡ 1 Kings xxxi. 11—13.

man in the world can scarce practise a better. It is this : for Christ's sake to forgive all those, from your very heart, who have done any injury or injuries unto you. This is not my doctrine, but the doctrine of St. Austin—"Those who desire to be delivered from this temporal purging fire, let them, by continual prayers, and frequent fastings, and large alms, and especially by forgiving those who have offended against them, redeem their ordinary daily sins."* This act, which St. Austin doth so especially, above all others, commend, hath a better recommendation in the word of God, which doth in plain terms promise to this act a plenary indulgence, a jubilee, a full remission of all sins in this large form of grant, "Forgive, and you shall be forgiven."† And again, "For if you will forgive men their offences, your Heavenly Father will forgive you also your offences."‡ This pardon you may gain for the souls in Purgatory. Hear, then, a memorable example to this purpose.

8. The only son of an honourable widow was murdered by a wicked fellow, who, being for this his murder in danger of being apprehended by the officers, had hid himself; but the officers and the widow had intelligence where he lay. The officers went to the place to take him, but the pious widow did, for God's sake, so truly pardon this greatest mischief which could have been done her, that she did not only certify the murderer of his danger, to the end that he might fly away in time, but for this end did she furnish him also with money, and gave him

* Serm. xli., *De Sanctis*.

† St. Luke vi. 37.

‡ St. Matt. vi. 14.

the horse of her dead son, that he might escape the better. After this, she retired herself to pray for her son's soul; when behold her son all in glory appeared unto her, and told her that for so great a charity towards his murderer, God had already freed him from the fire of Purgatory, which for many years he should have suffered.* Thus much for this point. We may also much relieve the souls in Purgatory, by suffering for them such crosses as it shall please God to lay upon us: as sickness, loss of goods, of friends, trouble of the mind, and all kind of afflictions; which are exceeding satisfactory, if we accept them willingly, or bear them patiently.

9. A third kind of satisfaction most available to the souls in Purgatory, is to exercise alms-deeds, which are most effectual to abolish all pain due to sin, and therefore most profitable to those poor souls, both when they are given to any sort of poor men, and most of all, when they are given unto those who are voluntarily poor, as all Religious, both men and women, are: for they will be sure to pray devoutly for the dead. So that they receive a double benefit, both by the gift of the alms itself, which is a work highly satisfactory, and also by the prayers of those to whom the alms are given, who often are very great servants of Almighty God, and their prayers most powerful with Him. It was the voice of an Angel sent from Heaven, which said—"Alms delivereth from death, and the same is that which purgeth away sins, and maketh to find mercy and life everlasting."† "Water quencheth a flaming fire, and alms resisteth

* Osorius, Fer. vi. post Cineres.

† Tobias xii. 9.

sins.”* Quench, O quench these so painful flames with so sovereign water. Hence is that excellent advice of St. Ambrose,† who exhorts the parents to bestow the portions which they intended to have given their children, who now are dead, in alms-deeds for the relief of their souls. The same devotion was also taught in the Greek Church by the golden mouth of St. Chrysostom‡—“If many barbarous people used to burn together the bodies of their dead friends, and all which belonged to them, far more rationally mayest thou make over to thy dead son those goods of thine” which thou hast designed for him. “Do you think that your son departed this life stained with any spot of sin?” Yes, surely thou hast reason to think so. But what then? Then saith St. Chrysostom—“Give him what should be his own, that thereby he may wipe off those stains.” So he. And in another place, he, upon another occasion, suggests a laudable exercise of charity, which our devotion may thus apply to the relief of the suffering souls of our brethren. Place at your bed’s head, or closet, a little box, and when you prepare to go to rest, and have now made your usual examen of your conscience, with hearty contrition and sorrow for your sins, enjoin yourself this small penance, to cast into that box the smallest farthing token, or mite, which thou hast, and account it a kind of sacrilege to bestow any parcel of this soul-money in any other use than alms to the poor, exercising this act of piety for the assistance of the poor souls in Purgatory. I will assure thee, thy own

* Ecclus. iii. 33.

† *De Fide Resurr.*, l. i.

‡ *Homil.* xxxii., t. ii., in *Matt.*

soul will have no small share in this alms. Thus you may "make unto you friends of the mammon of iniquity, that when you shall fail, they may receive you into everlasting dwellings."* Excellent also is that counsel which some give to rich men. They advise them, as often as they hear a poor man knocking at their door, to imagine themselves to hear the voice of a poor soul in Purgatory begging for relief: and if they have any mercy in them, this imagination will stir them up to bestow some small alms, both for the spiritual relief of the soul in Purgatory, and the corporal relief of their poor neighbour.

10. How grateful to God, and beneficial to the giver, those alms are which are bestowed upon others for their relief, will appear by a strange example, which I will relate to thee, only as a most profitably instructive parable, though I read it related as a true story in an author which I shall cite. The relation is of one Eusebius, Duke of Sardinia. This good Duke was so devoted to the souls in Purgatory, that he bestowed all the tithes of his dukedom in Masses, alms-deeds, and other pious works for their delivery; and, moreover, gave one of his best cities (which was therefore called the City of God), with all the revenues thereof, to be employed for the same end. It happened that Ostorgius, Duke of Sicily, being at war with this Eusebius, surprised this city. The news whereof being brought to Eusebius, he was so sensible of the loss, that he protested he had rather have lost half his dukedom; and so, with all speed drawing his men together (which were but a handful in regard of the

* St. Luke xvi. 9.

enemy), marched boldly on to recover the same. In the way, his scouts discovered a great army approaching with armour, horses, banners, all as white as snow; at which report the Duke was somewhat stricken: yet, reflecting better on the matter, conceived hope of good from that joyful colour. Wherefore, sending out four choice men to learn who they were, and what they intended, they were answered by four more of the white army coming to meet them, that they need not to fear, for they were soldiers to the King of Heaven, friends to Eusebius, and enemies to his enemy. The Duke was much comforted with this answer, and thereupon riding in person towards the army, was presently met and kindly saluted by some of them, who confirmed what had been said before, bidding him fear nothing, but march on with his army after theirs. So he did. Then the white army, which seemed to be forty thousand strong, making a stand near to the camp of Ostorgius, came presently to a parley, and gave him to understand that they were the soldiers of the King of Heaven, sent to revenge the unjust surprisal of that city belonging to their Master, and to put Eusebius again in possession; adding withal such threats, that Ostorgius was extremely terrified, and humbly demanded peace, promising all possible satisfaction. By this time Eusebius was come up, to whom Ostorgius readily offered to restore the double of what he had taken, and to make himself and his people tributary unto him. These conditions being agreed upon, Eusebius applied himself to the white army with such signs of gratitude as were fitting on that occasion; and then beginning to inquire more

particularly what they were, had for answer, that they were all souls delivered by his pious liberality out of Purgatory. So that he had just cause of much content in what he had done, and of encouragement to proceed in those charitable works, by which, doubtless, many more souls would be delivered out of that place of punishment: and then, taking a kind leave, they returned the same way they came.*

II. We need not doubt but Eusebius was unspeakably comforted in this strange occurrence, and must needs increase in devotion and liberality towards the souls which he found by experience to be so mindful of paying, and overpaying, their debts. And I pray God that others who have bags of gold and whole lordships to cast away at dice and cards, and waste in bravery and Epicurean feasting, may learn by this example, and by what hath been said before, rather to spend their riches hereafter with assurance of getting a hundred for one, than with mighty probability of losing thousands for nothing, and their own souls into the bargain.

* *Spec. Exempl.*, tit. Defunct., exemplo xxv.; Pinellus, *De Altera Vita*, l. i., cap. xxviii.; De Bonniers, *Advocat. Animarum*, cap. ii.; *Histor. Sardinia*, &c.

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

OF INDULGENCES.

AMONGST the means of relieving the souls in Purgatory, one of the chiefest is to gain such indulgences for them as are so granted, that they may be applied unto them. Now because, either for want of instruction in this point (which is not so easily understood) or for dulness of belief in it (because we, who are so bad, are hard to believe God should be so good), very many are lamentably negligent in the use of so great a treasure, I have thought it convenient to handle this point, which indeed is so necessary to be declared, somewhat largely.

2. For the perfect understanding of this matter, we must call to mind that which hath been sufficiently proved before in the first part,* how that after any sin is forgiven there doth commonly remain some guilt of pain due to so foul a crime. Well, then, the grant of an indulgence is the grant of the remission of this pain remaining after the sin is forgiven ; which grant is communicated unto us to supply graciously our want of due satisfaction by applying the superabundant satisfactions of Christ our Lord, which by His Vicar on earth are to this end applied unto us by the performance commonly of some work enjoined us for gaining of this indulgence.

3. So that you see here arise three things to be explicated. First, that the satisfactions of Christ are so abundant, that they are sufficient to supply any

* Chap. i.

want of satisfaction which any man or men can have. Secondly, that there is a Vicar of Christ on earth, who hath lawful power to apply these superabundant satisfactions of Christ for the supply of any want of satisfaction which we may be in. Thirdly, something also must be declared of the things which by Christ's Vicar use to be enjoined, that those satisfactions of Christ may be applied in this manner unto us.

4. First, then, that the satisfactions of Christ are so superabundant that they may be a cause sufficient to supply any, though never so great want of satisfactions, is easily granted by all; and clear of itself, if we do but remember that the blood of Christ was the blood of God, and consequently of so inestimable worth and value, that the shedding of one only drop of it was an act abundantly satisfactory for the sins of a whole world. Now then, our Saviour shedding this His divinely precious blood, not by small drops, but pouring it forth by plentiful showers, did heap up an immense treasure of satisfactions, superabundantly sufficient to satisfy for any pains due to any sin or sins whatsoever; for else our offences have been greater than His satisfactions; there wanteth not, therefore, a cause even superabundantly sufficient to supply any possible want of satisfaction which any man can be in; so infinite a treasure is this.

5. Secondly, there is in the Church lawful power and authority to apply to such as want satisfactions these superabundant satisfactions of Christ; for otherwise this infinite treasure of the superabundant satisfactions of Christ our Lord, heaped up for us, and for us only, would be wholly unprofitable to us, and merely

superfluous. It would be like the treasure which that miserable wretch in St. Luke did keep lapped up in his handkerchief, or the talent which that other, in St. Matthew, hid in the ground. Now, as the Holy Scripture saith, "Wisdom that is hid, and a treasure that is not seen, what profit is there in them both?"*

6. Wherefore, that this treasure may profit us, as it is superabundant, there must be left on earth power to dispense forth out of this superabundancy as much as our necessities may require. Which being so, to whom should we think this power to have been given rather than to him to whom it was said, "Feed my sheep;"† rather than to him to whom it was said, "I will give to thee the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven?"‡ For it is all one to have the keys of Heaven, and to have authority to remove the bar of the lock which shutteth Heaven's door; such a bar as sin is, not fully satisfied for. I would know, I say, in whom we should put this power, if not in him, for to him the words following do clearly give this commission: "Whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth, shall be loosed also in Heaven." Mark that word "whatsoever," that is, what thing soever it be which can bind a soul, whether it be guilt of sin, or guilt of pain due to sin, if thou dost loosen this band on earth, it shall be loosened in Heaven. This was a promise which doubtless Christ, Who always made good His Word, did perfectly keep.

7. Out of this which we have said, this convincing argument may be taken. There is power left in the Church to forgive sin in itself, which doth deserve

* Ecclus. xli. 17. † St. John xxi. 17. ‡ St. Matt. xvi. 19.

the pains we speak of ; therefore it is no wonder that there should be power to forgive the suffering of those pains. That there is power left to forgive sins, the text of Scripture doth literally affirm. The Protestant, if he standeth to the words of the Scripture, hath not a word to say. He must fly to his own exposition of the Word, which exposition why should any man in prudence follow, rather than the exposition of the most learned and most holy Fathers of the primitive Church, who studied the Scriptures day and night, and may be far more prudently thought to have understood them aright than those who live in an age so far from Christ, entangled with so many uncertain opinions, or rather, certain errors?

8. If the Protestants tell us they were men, and might err, we will desire them to remember that they also are men, and at least as likely to err as they were. If the Protestant saith he followeth Scripture, the plain words of Scripture are clear against him on this point, which is a point fundamental for it concerns the forgiveness of sin, a thing wholly necessary to salvation. You all profess the Scripture to speak clear in points fundamental and necessary to salvation. Tell me, then, what do these words clearly sound, "Whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth, it shall be loosed also in Heaven?" And again, "Whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them?"* The Novatian heretics did say (and our sectaries say the same) "that they do yield reverence unto God, to Whom alone they reserve the power of forgiving sins," as St. Ambrose testifieth.* But what saith this

* St. John xxi. 23.

holy Doctor to them? He tells them, that no sort of men yield less reverence to God than they do in proceeding thus, and he gives a convincing reason to prove this his saying. Hear his own words: "Yea, no men do Christ a greater injury than these men, who will make void His gift. For whereas He in His Gospel hath said, 'Whose sins you forgive, shall be forgiven them,' who, I pray, honours Christ more—he who assents to this, or he who resists it? But they tell us, they pardon less sins" (for this was the answer of the Novatians). "But God," saith St. Ambrose, "makes not this distinction, Who gives this license to His Priests, without any exception." Christ's words are absolute—"Whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them." And St. Chrysologus, writing on these words, saith thus, "Where be those men that assert sins cannot be forgiven by men unto men? Peter doth forgive sins, and with all joy doth receive the penitent; and he embraceth this power, granted by God unto all Priests."† St. Leo the Great writeth thus, "Christ Jesus gave this power to the governors of the Church, that by the door of reconciliation they should admit them to the communion of the Sacraments, being purged."‡ But what more clear than that of St. Chrysostom?—"It was only lawful to the Priests of the Jews to cleanse, or, to speak more truly, not to cleanse, but to approve as cleansed, the leprosy of the body. But to our Priests it was granted, not to cleanse the leprosy of the body, but it was granted unto them, I do not say to approve for

* *De Pœnit.*, l. i., cap. ii.

† *Serm.* lxxxiv.

‡ *Epist.* xci. *ad Theodos.*

cleansed, but thoroughly to cleanse the filth of the soul.”* Here you see condemned, in as clear words as can be spoken, the error of the Protestants, who say that the power of our Priests is to declare our sins forgiven, and not to forgive them : but St. Chrysostom saith that he doth not say this—“I do not say to approve for cleansed, but thoroughly to cleanse the filth of the soul.” This being proved, let us proceed.

9. If Christ's Vicar upon earth hath the power to forgive the sins which did deserve eternal pain, and consequently to loosen the band of eternal pains, can it seem much that he should have power to loosen the bands of temporal pain, with which the sinner is tied after his sins are remitted? The contrary surely would seem the greater wonder. Yet because (and so I come to declare the third point which I undertook, concerning the thing enjoined to be performed for the gaining of indulgences), because, I say, all power given by Christ unto His Vicar is well ordered, and granted for the edification, not for the destruction of the Church, this authority of dispensing the treasures of Christ's superabundant satisfactions was given so that it might be dispensed forth with prudent liberality, not poured out with lavishing prodigality. Wherefore all Protestants and Catholics are to understand that our most esteemed Divines in this age are of opinion that it is not in the power of the Pope to grant an indulgence for the performance of a good work so little, that it cannot be a proportionable cause to grant this favour, as, for example, and it is the example of St. Bonaventure,† to grant a great

* *De Sacerd. Initio.*, l. iii. † St. Bonaventure, iv., dist. 20, q. 9.

sinner a plenary indulgence for giving an alms of three halfpence.

10. But it is exceedingly to be marked, that when the Pope granteth a great indulgence, which may be obtained by doing of some thing, perhaps as small as giving an alms of three halfpence, the reason of the grant of this indulgence is not merely that so little a good work should be performed, for then (as St. Bonaventure teacheth) it would be an imprudent and an impossible grant; but the reason of the grant of such an indulgence is the obtaining of some very great good, and a good so great (for this Bellarmine seemeth to require), that the obtaining of it maketh more to God's glory, and is more grateful to Him, than it would be to have our forgiven sins punished in Purgatory with due rigour of justice. For example, such a good would be the conversion of heretics, constant peace in the Church of God, the notable advancement of some great or some necessary act of piety, faith, religion, charity, &c. The obtaining of such goods as these is the thing which moveth the Pope to grant these indulgences, and to dispense forth the treasures committed unto him by Christ for the greater glory of Christ, which is a very prudent and well-ordered dispensation; for so those who are put in charge with other's goods, do most faithfully exercise their charge if they lay them out for the greater benefit of those who did put them in trust.

11. I see well that it will be objected, that though the Pope doth piously and prudently to employ the treasure committed to his charge for obtaining of a greater good, yet it seemeth that he doth imprudently

to use, for obtaining of it, such an unproportionable and unfit means as is to enjoin only the performance of so little a good work to be done for this end, as, for example, to enjoin only the saying of five *Pater nosters* for obtaining so great a good as is the conversion of infidels, extirpation of heretics, &c. And therefore, though the cause of this grant be reasonable, yet the means applied seem most unreasonable. I answer that the performance of so little a good work as is the saying of five *Pater nosters* for obtaining the good for which the indulgence is granted, may be a very effectual means for obtaining of so great a good. Which that I may show, let us but consider what doth daily happen when the Pope granteth such an indulgence as this is. The grant of this indulgence is no sooner made known unto the Church, but presently you shall see all faithful people, by thousands, with one heart and one soul, doing that which is necessary for gaining of this indulgence; that is, by a true, entire, and hearty confession and contrition, putting themselves (if they fear they were not in it before) in a state of grace and friendship with God, and then after this (for this must be done for gaining of indulgences) devoutly performing the good work enjoined them to be performed, and performing it to the end for which it was enjoined. Now, though this good work be but little, though it be but the saying of five *Pater nosters* for the aforesaid intention, yet when even so few prayers are said with one heart and with one soul by so many thousands of thousands as use (by the grant of so great an indulgence exacting only the perform-

ance of so small a work) to be stirred up to the devout recital of these prayers, the quantity of all these prayers put together amounteth to an immense sum, a sum so great, and made up by such a uniform devotion of so many faithful people, that it may in prudence be thought to be a means sufficient to effect the good intended.

12. Hence it appeareth that the performance of a little thing may be an effectual means to obtain a great good, when by the exacting of a thing so small everybody is invited to do what is necessary to the perfect performance of it ; whereas if they were invited by a small indulgence, or by a great one, which could not be gained but by some great good work, as fasting many days, saying many prayers, and the like. very few would be induced to gain this indulgence. And so it may well happen that Christ's Vicar can scarce use any means more effectual to obtain a good which maketh so much to God's glory and the benefit of His Church, than by granting some great indulgence, which may be gained by doing some small good work for his intention. For it is very likely that a far greater quantity of good works will be raised while every one contributeth a little, than when almost everybody layeth aside all care of doing anything, because without he doth a great deal he is never the nearer, forasmuch as concerneth the gaining of the indulgence. We use to say, 'tis well for poor men that brass farthings go currently, for now everybody comes easily off with a farthing, whereas their charity would hardly be great enough to part with a penny.

13. All which we have said, hath far less difficulty

when an indulgence is granted to bring into public practice some important act of piety, or to hinder decay of some devotion, especially of some virtue necessary to salvation, as faith, charity, contrition, &c. Because in this case, not only all these things do make more to God's glory than that ordinary severity of punishing by the pains of Purgatory; but it is easily understood how these so important things may effectually be procured by the performance of things but small in themselves, though great in their effects. For example, it is a thing most important that all faithful people should profess union with their Supreme Pastor, and also the decay of this union is much to be feared, by reason of the power of heresy. Again, this union may effectually be brought into great request by making sometimes in a year some public and solemn profession of it; which may be done by coming humbly to receive his benediction on some great festivity; therefore the Pope both may, and doth, most piously and prudently, in granting a great indulgence for performing an act in itself so easy and little as is to ask his benediction.

14. In like manner true faith, without which it is impossible to please God, is lost by obstinately rejecting the authority of the Church, though in matters otherwise of no exceeding great consequence; therefore the maintaining of faith in all such matters, when there is danger of the loss of it, maketh very much to God's glory and the good of souls. Now the pious belief of these points, so important, may efficaciously be upholden, and brought into public practice and veneration, by the practice of some acts, which

are most easily performed ; for example sake, prayer for the dead, veneration of relics, gaining of indulgences, are points of faith which heretics seek by all means to overthrow. Again, they may be efficaciously maintained in a continual and most devout practice, if the Pope would grant some great indulgence for making some frequent pious acts, which may revive these devotions, and keep the practice of them in daily use.

15. Now, to stop in a word the mouths of Protestants, which are so wide open to cry down these indulgences, I will only put them in mind of their own doctrine. They say—A man is justified by faith only ; insomuch that if a man were as great a sinner as could be, yet this man, if he would but make one act of true faith, would be in a moment justified, and not so much as liable to the least punishment for all his innumerable and enormous sins. Is any pardon, indulgence, or jubilee, so easily obtained, or so incredible as this? Do but believe (which will not pain your bones the least), and all, all, though it were a thousand times more, is wholly forgiven you ; and sin as much to-morrow (if it be possible) as you have sinned in all the days of your life, and you shall not cease for all this to be justified, if you do not cease to believe, which (as they say) you cannot cease to do. Was there ever the like device to make wide the strait gate of Heaven? Whereas, if you will obtain a Catholic indulgence, first you must believe, but this is not all, as it is with the Protestants ; secondly, you must have true hope ; thirdly, you must be in perfect charity, and in the state of grace, and consequently

you must have had a true and hearty repentance of all your sins, you must have a firm purpose to forsake them, you must have made an entire and contrite confession of them, you must, if you have wronged any man, have made him due satisfaction ; and after all this, you must do the thing which is required for the obtaining of the indulgence, which (though in some occasions it be little) many times it is the fast of three days, the visiting of churches, the devout praying in them, the giving of alms, and the like.

16. And all this being duly performed, that which is wanting to the full satisfaction of the pain due to your forgiven sins, shall be graciously supplied by the superabundant satisfactions of Christ our Lord, applied by His Vicar unto you to this end. So that, even after all this, no one sin is by the indulgence forgiven you ; for all Catholics teach that all the indulgences in the world cannot forgive the least mortal sin, no, nor venial, as most affirm ; but all that is forgiven by way of indulgence is the pain to which the sinner was liable even after his sin was forgiven him. And therefore, if the sin remain still unforgiven, the pain due unto it cannot by any indulgence be forgiven. And this is a great reason why so few do obtain a perfect plenary indulgence of all that pain which they are liable unto, because there be but few who use due diligence to procure all their sins, even venial, to be fully forgiven them. For who is he who remains not addicted to some venially offensive affection? Whence it must needs happen that until we be perfectly converted from all venial affections to sin, we shall not obtain a full plenary indulgence of all our sins.

For as long as any sin remains unrepented, the remission of the pain due to that sin will never be obtained by any indulgence. And this is a benefit so great, that the serious consideration thereof ought to quicken our diligence in the pious use of indulgences.

17. By this doctrine all may clearly see how far we are from opening a gap to liberty in sinning, whilst we so much maintain the virtue of indulgences. For who seeth not, that whilst to the gaining of a pardon of any sin, we exact as a necessary condition the hearty and unfeigned retractation of that sin, we wage war as fiercely against sin, and stand upon as vigorous a defiance of all (even venial) affections, as any maintainers of any contrary doctrine. Add to this that we still teach no indulgence, either for living or dead, to be of value in the Court of Heaven, unless there be a sufficient cause for the grant of that indulgence, and a work proportionable to so great a grant be exacted of us, as hath been more fully declared.* Wherefore we tell every one that we never promise fully any assured pardon to either living or dead upon the performance of the work exacted in the grant of such indulgence, unless the said grant be issued forth upon sufficient cause, and require the performance of some work bearing due proportion to the indulgences granted. Only God can tell when these circumstances concur. We, remaining doubtful in each particular grant, give no man any such undoubted assurance as excludes all fear; and, consequently, we never exclude all other possible diligences, or slacken their industry in applying all other good means, which any one's

* Nn. 9—11.

learning or piety can suggest. We exhort all, by all means, to make their best use of the best practices which the Church teaches, to cancel their own sins, or to expiate the sins of their deceased brother. But among these practices of the Church we place the use of indulgences. For we know (as I have showed in my first part)* that when Peter de Osma did presume to teach that the Bishop of Rome could not pardon the pain of Purgatory, Sixtus IV., then Chief Pastor of the Church, condemned the proposition in these words—"By Apostolical authority we do declare all and every one of the aforesaid propositions [of which this is one] to be false, to be contrary to the Catholic Church, to be erroneous, scandalous, altogether disagreeing from evangelical truth, and containing manifest heresy. Dated at Rome, at St. Peters, A.D. 1478." We know also that Leo X., in his Bull against Luther, having recited several propositions taught by him, among others puts down these three—

"I. The treasures of the Church, whence the Pope giveth indulgences, are not the merits of Christ and His Saints.

"II. Indulgences to those who gain them truly, do not avail them to gain pardon of the pain due to actual sins by the Divine Justice.

"III. To six kind of men indulgences are neither necessary nor profitable, to wit, to the dead," &c.

Then follows their condemnation in these words—"We do condemn, reprove, and wholly reject all and every one of the aforesaid articles and errors, as

* Chap. xii.

being respectively heretical, or scandalous, or false, or offensive to pious ears, or seductive of simple minds, and contrary to Catholic verity." This last censure being put conjunctively, falls upon all the aforesaid propositions, so that they be all condemned as contrary to Catholic verity. Whence there follow these words—"Forbidding in virtue of holy obedience and under pain of excommunication, *late sententie* (the sentence of which is already given by the tenour of the present), that no man do presume under any colour that may be sought out, covertly or openly, to assert, affirm or defend the aforesaid errors or any of them." We know, therefore, that the Church doth so own the doctrine contrary to these propositions, that it is not lawful for any child of the Church, under pain of mortal disobedience, to teach or affirm any of these contrary articles. The reader who desires more full satisfaction in these points may read what we have largely declared in the first part of this treatise.*

18. This sufficeth to make us rest assured that such indulgences as by the See Apostolic are granted as appliable to the souls in Purgatory, may be available unto them when they be duly granted. And though we have no infallible means to know when they be duly granted, or when not, yet, when we see the Chief Pastor of the Church, after a grave consultation of the matter, to judge himself to have sufficient cause to grant such indulgences, we also cannot but hold it probable that this indulgence is duly granted. And the probable hope of obtaining so great a good ought, with as great reason, to excite us to the purchase

* Chap. xii.

thereof with all care and diligence ; as the probable hope of recovering our health or saving our life by such a medicine, doth, according to reason, move all reasonable creatures to make use of the said medicine, although they have no undoubted, but only a probable, assurance that it will work the effect desired. And the same is to be said concerning indulgences for the living, yet in both cases our hope and confidence of obtaining the pardon is then heightened to a higher degree when the cause of the grant of the indulgence, and the work appointed for the gaining thereof, bears a greater proportion with the effect. Hence it is that we most prudently rely with greater confidence of gaining a plenary indulgence by entrance into Religion, and there making the three substantial vows of Poverty, Chastity, Obedience, thus casting off from ourselves for ever the dominion of all earthly goods, the enjoying all carnal pleasures, and the free use of our own will, than by performance of other far more unproportionable works. Wherefore I think that, among such plenary indulgences as are obtainable by those who lead a secular life in the world, there is scarce any (speaking of such as be practically gainable by most) more assured than that which this present Head Pastor of the Church hath not long since granted to all, either men or women, who for eight continual days shall make the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius, in the manner expressed in the said grant. For what action (commonly speaking) is ever performed by any secular lay person bearing a greater proportion to entire remission of all his sins than the attending for eight days together to those meditations,

which, by the experience of so many thousands, have been found so effectual to reform a sinful, and to form a new, truly virtuous life? The importance of the matter hath enforced so long a stay upon this subject.

THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER.

TWO OTHER MEANS OF HIGH PERFECTION, BY WHICH WE MAY RELIEVE THE SOULS IN PURGATORY.

THE first is, to offer up all our good actions, thoughts, words, and sufferings, desiring God to accept of them for the relief of such a soul or souls in Purgatory ; to offer them up all, I say, as they are satisfactory, for so they do either only or chiefly profit them, and so we remain free to apply the same works, as they are impetratory for obtaining anything we desire to pray for. Yet I would not have this so understood as though we were not in the first place to satisfy any obligation, which perhaps we might have, of employing some part of our works for other intentions ; neither would I advise any man to perform the penances enjoined him in confession for satisfaction of the sins of any other besides himself. But out of these or such like cases, I know not how we can better apply our actions, as they are satisfactory ; for thus all our actions are not less but more meritorious, not less but more impetratory, not less but more satisfactory: thus we may hope to escape all or the greatest part of Purgatory pains. Wherefore it

is not against charity towards ourselves to be thus liberal. All these things have been proved in the former chapters.

2. A man would think it were not possible to proceed any further in this charitable devotion. But charity is so witty in her inventions that she hath found out a way to give more than she hath or ever had in this life. You shall see this verified in a strange manner and an unheard-of example, which cannot be well understood without we first let all know that, whensoever any one dieth in the Society of Jesus, even the meanest Brother in the House, it is ordained by the Constitutions of the same Society, that all of that House, where the party deceaseth, who are Priests are to say three Masses for his soul, and those who are not Priests three pair of beads, and throughout the whole Province (which many times consists of seven or eight hundred persons) every Priest is to say two Masses, and each one of the rest two pair of beads, for the same intention. And besides all these prayers, every Priest of our Society throughout the whole world is obliged every week to say one Mass, and each one of those who are not Priests one pair of beads, for those of their Order deceased out of their particular Provinces, for if the deceased be of the same Province, then they are to say for them two a piece, as even now hath been said. Hence it appeareth that there dieth not any one in the Society for whom a very great multitude of Masses and prayers are not said. Let us put a probable supposition. Suppose there be sixteen thousand persons in the Society, and that one half of this

number be Priests, the rest either Students, Novices, or Lay-brothers ; let us also suppose that, taking one week with another, there die out of this number four a week. This supposed, it followeth that every one of these four shall have for his part alone near two thousand Masses and as many pair of beads said for his soul out of the Province where he died, besides those which are said for him in the House and Province in which he died. This being so, hear now a rare act of charity :

3. Father Ferdinand Monsoy, of the Society of Jesus, a man of rare sanctity, when he came to die, knowing, and in that hour lively apprehending, what comfort he might take in the multitude of Masses and prayers which he knew should after his death be said for his soul, according to the rule of his Order, was, notwithstanding, so inflamed with ardent charity towards the souls of his and Christ's brethren suffering in Purgatory, that he bequeathed unto them by will and testament all the Masses and other prayers which after his departure should be offered up for his soul ; and so departed this life, either directly towards Heaven (as is most probable) or a welcome guest to the souls in Purgatory.* Can charity proceed any further ? Let, then, the imitation of this example be a second means for them whose charity burns so much hotter than Purgatory. If a third means of relieving these souls more perfect than this could be found, yet all that could be done ought not to seem too much, seeing it is done for Christ's sake, for His brethren, for souls so esteemed by Him

* Euseb. Nieremberg, *Tract. de Purgatorio*.

that what is done for them He taketh it as done unto Himself.

4. If any demand whether these two devotions may be securely practised by all kinds of men, what quality soever they be of, I answer that they may, with great profit of their own and their neighbours' souls and advancement of God's glory, if, for more caution, this condition be added—"As far as it is suitable to God's holy will, and maketh to the greatest increase of His glory, I offer up, for the relief of the souls in Purgatory, the whole satisfactory virtue of whatsoever good I shall do or evil I shall suffer all the time of my whole life, and all the prayers and other good works whatsoever which shall be performed for me after my death; so far, I say, as this shall be most pleasing to God." For what danger can there be in this act? Can that be anyway subject to be done amiss which is wholly subjected to the divine will? Two extremes might be dangerous in that which concerns devotion for the souls in Purgatory—the first, by showing them too little charity; the second, by forgetting well-ordered charity towards ourselves and our neighbours here on earth. As for the first, this charity cannot be too little, because we do for the souls as great a part of our actions as God would have us, for we offer them all, so far as is most agreeable to His holy will; and as for the second, we forget not to reserve as great a part of our works for ourselves and our neighbours on earth as God would have us, for we give away no more than best pleaseth Him and maketh most to His greatest honour. So that I cannot discover the

least shadow of danger in practising these devotions in the manner above said; for would any man do more for himself or less for these poor souls, than God would have him?

5. The Reverend Father Eusebius Nieremberg, in a treatise he wrote of Purgatory, did handle this point so well, that two worthy Doctors and Professors of Divinity at Lyons, in France, diligently examining the force of his reasons, were so convinced thereby that both of them, together with divers of their scholars, gave all the satisfactions of their whole life to the souls in Purgatory.* This devotion, in fine, hath been practised by many great servants of God highly recommended for their piety by most grave authors, and God did reward St. Gertrude for it in that liberal manner before mentioned; and if it be used with the caution now spoken of, no man can suspect it, neither can there be any want of devotion in adding a condition so pious.

* *Libell. de modo se citò ditandi.*

THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER.

TO WHAT SOULS IN PURGATORY WE ARE CHIEFLY TO
APPLY OUR SATISFACTORY WORKS.

I KNOW not how to begin this chapter better than by answering an objection which some speculative wits may chance to stumble at. "Alas!" will some say, "what good will all my poor works do when they come to be shared among so many thousand souls as be in Purgatory? They will be like a little loaf of bread amongst a great multitude of beggars, which, if it be equally cut, every one will scarce receive a crumb." These men seem to suppose themselves the only men in the world who show charity to the souls in Purgatory. For if there be others (and many others) who by God's grace are no less charitable and liberal than they, it is not hard to understand how, by the help of many, many may be holpen. That which Thomas or William doth contribute towards the maintenance of a whole army will not afford every soldier a farthing, and yet, because others in great multitudes contribute as well as they, whole armies are easily maintained in a flourishing estate. So, whilst many devout souls relieve these helpless souls, many helpless souls are relieved.

2. And, indeed, we have great reason to show charity to all. For, first, the law of nature crieth out unto us—"All things therefore whatsoever you would that men should do to you, do you also to

them.”* Secondly, the written law in plain terms saith—“Love thy neighbour as thyself.” Thirdly, our Saviour addeth a strange force also to this precept—“This is My commandment, that you love one another, as I have loved you.”† Now, how He loved us, all His life, and most of all His blessed death, doth testify. Fourthly, all souls are so esteemed by Christ, that He taketh that charity which is showed to the least of them as kindly as if it were done to Himself in person. In fine, the virtue of mercy calls upon us to assist all who are in extreme necessity, as these poor souls are. These be forcible reasons, moving us to assist all that be in Purgatory.

3. Yet it is in no case to be misliked, but it is rather a most commendable devotion, to pray for some souls in particular, and in the first place for those to which, besides those general reasons now alleged for all, we may have some peculiar obligation. For some we may be bound to pray by our own oath, promise, compact, rule, &c. For others by the virtue of piety, as our parents, spiritual Fathers, kindred, friends, acquaintance, &c. For some, again, out of gratitude, as our benefactors, spiritual and temporal, &c. These reasons be more particular, and therefore they ought to prevail more with us than those other general reasons, for which we are to pray for all men, because the general reasons make as much for these as for any other; and besides, they have also their particular reasons.

4. But when we know not such particular reasons,

* St. Matt. vii. 12.

† St. John xv. 12.

as these are, yet it will be piously done to pray for some souls in particular, though in a manner more general. For example, for that soul whose delivery maketh most to God's glory, whose relief or release-ment the glorious Virgin Mary most desires; for those who were most devoted to her; for those who be in greatest necessity, most of all forlorn, &c.; for those who are so near their delivery that by our small devotions they may be perfectly set free, and, consequently, immediately glorify God, pray for us, &c. In fine, here every man may do what is most suitable to his private devotion, which notwithstanding is best when it is ordered by the most perfect rule of God's greater glory. Wherefore, for my part, I make choice to pray more especially for that soul whose relief or deliverance makes most to God's glory. To me indeed this soul is unknown, but God's all-seeing eye is presently cast upon her.

THE FIFTEENTH CHAPTER.

THE PERFECT PRACTICE OF ALL CONTAINED IN THIS BOOK.

WHOSOEVER to God's glory, the good of his own soul, and relief of those in Purgatory, desireth to put in practice all which hath been treated of in this book, must first above all things have a care to put and keep himself in a state of grace, for if he hath not the grace and charity of God, though he should distribute all his substance to the poor or all his works to the souls in Purgatory, it would profit him nothing at all. True it is, the prayers and sacrifices which by my procurement are offered for the souls lose not their force and efficacy in order to their relief. But the satisfactory virtue which my good works would have if performed in a state of grace, and the great merit which might accrue to me by the performance of them, is all lost whilst I live in sin. I know the infinite mercies of God be often so great that, to such as are much addicted to works of mercy, He sometimes most graciously bestows the unspeakable benefit of true and hearty contrition and repentance, which ought to be a strong motive to such as live in sin not to cast off the daily practice of good works. But they must know that God hath not obliged Himself thereunto by any promise, as He hath to reward all good works done in grace. Let it then be the first document to him who intends to be good to the souls in Purgatory, to be so good to his own soul as still to be careful to live in a state of grace.

2. Secondly, he must not slubber over this devotion in a careless manner, giving his works away, and little marking why or what he gives, or doing it only because he conceives it to be a good devotion. But he must take some short time to consider the motives set down in this treatise, and must ponder each motive by itself until his will be stirred up effectually to afford all the relief he is able to the distressed souls. Neither is this any long business, because even the reading attentively these motives is sufficient to move any heart to help such helpless souls ; and this is the thing we desire, for we little regard the being moved to a soft and tender compassion, which God knows is often very fruitless and soon vanisheth away.

3. Wherefore, that all may perform this with little or no difficulty, we will set down in plain and full words the manner of making perfectly all those acts which in any part of this treatise have been recommended. But let no man think, unless he would make a meditation of this matter (as he may do with great fruit in the space of half an hour), that we would have him make all these acts at one time, but rather that he exercise now one, now another, more or fewer, according to his leisure and devotion, yet it will be best to exercise often the most perfect. Now, for the reader's commodity, we will cite the chapters where the matters are treated at large which here are only touched in a word.

4. The first act, answerable to the first, second, and third chapters, may be thus made—"Oh, how excessive is the bitterness of those pains which these afflicted souls do suffer in Purgatory ! What a misery it is to

be banished (though for a time only) from the face of God ! In what a sea of affliction must that poor soul be which for a short space is condemned to remain in this pitiful state ! Wherefore, O my soul, afford these souls of thy brethren all the help thou canst : pray for them, exercise acts of penance for them. Help them by devoutly frequenting the holy Sacraments and procuring others to do the same ; offer up as often as thou canst, and, as often as thou canst, procure the holy sacrifice of Mass may be offered for them ; give alms that they may be prayed for ; relieve them by all indulgences which may be gained for them ; let all the satisfactory actions and sufferings of thy whole life be offered up for them, so far as it is suitable to God's holy will, and so far as it maketh to His greater glory ; bequeath unto them all the good works which after thy departure out of this life shall be done for thee. O Lord, accept of this my most hearty oblation, made in the behalf of my distressed brethren."

5. The second act, answerable to the fourth chapter.* "O my God, how great is Thy excellency, worth, and perfection ! All honour and glory is due unto Thee. I, poor creature, know not how more perfectly to procure Thy Divine Majesty to be praised, honoured, and glorified, than by doing all I am able to discover some soul or souls which, being released by my means from Purgatory, may honour, praise, and glorify thy sacred Majesty in the highest manner. Wherefore, O my soul, to this end afford these souls of thy brethren all the help thou canst. Pray for them," &c., as it followeth in the former act.

* N. 2.

6. The third act, answerable also to the fourth chapter.* “O most merciful, liberal, and good God, how many and how great benefits hast Thou, with unspeakable love, heaped upon me! How shall I be able to requite this Thy bounty, mercy, and goodness? I, poor creature, know not how more perfectly to procure Thy Divine Majesty,” &c., all as followeth in the second act.

7. The fourth act, answerable to the fourth chapter.† “How many and how enormous have been the sins by which I have dishonoured Thee, my good God! Thee, O infinite Excellency! Thee, O immense Goodness! I, poor creature, know not how more perfectly to procure Thy Divine Majesty,” &c., as before in the second act.

8. The fifth act, answerable to the fourth chapter also.‡ “O my dear Jesus, Thou lovest the souls of my brethren so dearly, that whatsoever for Thy sake is done unto them Thou accountest done unto Thyself. Wherefore, O my soul, to this end afford the souls of thy brethren,” &c., as before in the first act. But because, after this plain and distinct setting down all these acts in order, some may desire to have them all composed in one shorter form, which they may add every day to their ordinary morning’s oblation, that so they may the more easily offer up daily either all the works of that day, or (if their devotion moves them thereunto) all the satisfactory good works of their whole life, I have thought it expedient to draw up into one act the substance of all that hath been comprised in all the former acts together, which may

* N. 3.

† N. 4.

‡ N. 5.

be done thus—"That to the uttermost of my power I may relieve the souls of my dear brethren from those their excessive pains and that yet more painful banishment from the face of God, and shorten their so long sufferings ; that I may procure them a more speedy passage to eternal bliss ; that I may, in the best manner known unto me, procure the sovereign majesty of my dearest God to be more perfectly honoured and glorified ; that I may return to my most bountiful Benefactor the noblest kind of thanksgiving which lieth in my power ; that I may more perfectly repair His honour, which by innumerable sins I have so much violated, with the most grateful satisfaction I can devise ; that I may, in fine, perform a service so acceptable and pleasing to Christ our Lord, to His dear Mother, and to my most honoured Patrons, St. Joseph, S.S. N.N., and all the blessed Spirits in Heaven, who so joy in their brother's good, as in their own—behold, I do offer unto Thee, my God, the most tender Lover of Souls, I do offer up unto Thee this day, for the relief of such a soul, or souls, or of all the souls in Purgatory, not only all the good works (as they are satisfactory) which I shall do or any other shall do for me this day, but also even all the good works which ever through the course of my whole life either I shall perform or any one at any time shall offer for me ; yea, those prayers, sacrifices, or other good works which they shall at any time offer for my soul after my departure, I do now out of all these motives offer up unto Thee, as far as this may be done in a manner pleasing unto Thee. Receive, O my dearest Jesus, this my small oblation, which I

make in the behalf of those souls for which Thou didst shed every drop of Thy blood, offered up together in the union of all which through Thy whole life Thou didst do or suffer for our souls, that, by Thy most precious merits, this my oblation may be more grateful to Thy Eternal Father, to Whose infinite mercy I commend my own poor soul and the souls of all my brethren, by the merits of Thy most Precious Blood. Amen."

9. Here thou hast in brief the practice of this whole devotion, a devotion by which we may purchase many great commodities and suffer no discommodity, by which our works may become more meritorious, our prayers more impetratory, our actions more highly satisfactory, and finally, by which we may have great hope to escape either all or at least a great part of Purgatory.

10. Neither is there any danger of violating charity due to ourselves by the practice of this devotion, but we may rather offend against charity by making slight of a devotion which might have been so beneficial to us. For it is clear out of the precedent chapters we can lose nothing and must needs gain much—much for ourselves, much for our neighbour, and much for the glory of Almighty God, to Whom be all praise and glory for ever and ever. Amen.



APPENDIX.

THE HEROIC ACT OF CHARITY.

SINCE the time when Father Mumford wrote, the Church has placed her seal of approbation on the devotion advocated by him, in its highest form. Pope Benedict XIII., Pope Pius VI., and our reigning Sovereign Pontiff, Pius IX., have granted magnificent Indulgences to all who perform "the Heroic Act of Charity, or Offering of all works of satisfaction and suffrages in behalf of the souls in Purgatory." The following account of those Indulgences is taken from the authorized translation of the Roman *Raccolta*, by the Reverend Father Ambrose St. John, of the Birmingham Oratory.

This Heroic Act of Charity in behalf of the souls in Purgatory consists in a voluntary offering made in their favour by any one of the Faithful of all works of satisfaction done by him in this life, as well as of all suffrages which shall be offered for him after his death ; by this act he deposits them all into the hands of the Blessed Virgin, that she may distribute them in behalf of those holy souls whom it is her good pleasure to deliver from the pains of Purgatory, at the same time that he declares that by this offering he only foregoes in their behalf the special and personal fruit of each satisfactory work ; so that, being a Priest, he is not hindered from applying the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass according to the intention of those who give him alms.

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This Heroic Act of Charity, called also a Vow or Oblation, was instituted by Father Gaspar Oriden, a Theatine; for although it was not unknown in former ages, it was he who propagated it, and it was at his prayer that it was enriched with many Indulgences: first by Pope Benedict XIII., in a decree of August 23, 1728; and then by Pope Pius VI., in a decree of December 12, 1788; these Indulgences were finally specified by our Sovereign Pontiff Pius IX., in a decree of the Sacred Congregation of Indulgences, of September 30, 1852. They are as follows—

1. An Indult of a privileged altar, personally, every day in the year, to all Priests who have made this offering.

2. A Plenary Indulgence, applicable only to the departed, to all the Faithful who have made this offering, whenever they go to Holy Communion, provided they visit a church or public oratory, and pray there for a time according to the mind of His Holiness.

3. A Plenary Indulgence, every Monday, to all who hear Mass in suffrage for the souls in Purgatory, provided they visit the church, and pray as above.

4. All Indulgences granted or to be granted, even though not applicable to the dead, which are gained by the Faithful who have made this offering, may be applied to the holy souls in Purgatory.

5. Lastly, the same Sovereign Pontiff, Pope Pius IX., having regard to the young who are not yet communicants, as well as to the poor sick, to those who are afflicted with chronic disorders, to the aged, to farm-labourers, prisoners, and others who are debarred from communicating and unable to hear Mass on Mondays, vouchsafed by another decree of the Sacred Congregation of Indulgences, of November 20, 1854, to declare, that for all the Faithful who cannot hear Mass on Monday, the Mass heard on Sundays should be available for gaining the Indulgence No. 3; and that in favour of those who are not yet communicants, or who are hindered from communicating, he leaves it at the disposal of their respective Ordinaries to authorize confessors to commute the works enjoined.

And note, lastly, that although this act of charity is denominated a vow in some printed tracts, in which also is given a

formula for making the offering, no inference is to be drawn therefrom that this offering binds under sin ; neither is it necessary to make use of the said formula, since, in order to share in the said Indulgences, no more is required than a hearty act of our will.

The principle on which this Heroic Act mainly rests is clearly laid down by Father Mumford in his sixth and eighth chapters. In the latter he says (p. 44) that the help afforded by us to the suffering souls "is an act so highly meritorious of grace and glory, an act so impetratory of such things as may be eternally beneficial to our own souls, that the loss of the fruit of our satisfactions is nothing to be valued in regard of the gain which we purchase."

And again, in the tenth chapter (p. 54), when replying to the objection that to give away to others what would be accepted by God in the stead of the debt of our own temporal punishment is against well-ordered charity, he says, "Though we did become liable to these and greater pains, yet they were not so much to be esteemed as a flea-bite for gaining of a kingdom, if by this our charity towards the souls we might increase (as we do most highly increase) the crown of our eternal glory."

And, once more, "It is nothing against well-ordered charity towards ourselves to help these souls as much as we can ; but it needs must be against perfection of this charity not to assist them to our full power, for that we lose the merit of so rare a charity, and the loss of this merit is a loss of the more perfect sight of God for ever. What a loss is this, dear brother—what a loss is this ! Remember what we said out

of St. Thomas,* 'That our essential bliss' (which consists in the fruition of God, of which we are made more abundantly partaker by having exercised more abundant charity to our neighbour) 'is infinitely better than the forgiveness of temporal pain;' which, notwithstanding, is the chiefest good, which those niggards aim at who pretend so much charity to themselves. They understand not that true charity to themselves consists in the real desiring, and effectually procuring, their own good. Those do not do this, who, fixing their eyes only upon that temporal good which consists in purchasing forgiveness of the temporal pain due to their sins, omit to procure that which 'is infinitely better than this forgiveness'—that is, they omit to purchase a more eminent degree in fruition of essential beatitude, by being made partakers of which they might have known, honoured, loved, and enjoyed God for a whole eternity, in a far more perfect manner than now they shall. A good, so far surpassing the forgiveness of all temporal pain in Purgatory, that there is not one of the Saints in Heaven who would not willingly undergo the temporal pains of a thousand Purgatories, if, by the undergoing of them, he might notably increase his essential glory in beatifical vision and fruition; as we may do, exercising these most meritorious acts of charity in relieving the souls in Purgatory, which, how much they conduce to our advancement in essential beatitude, hath been largely declared in the sixth and seventh chapters."

On the other hand, the positions by which Father

* Chap. vi., n. 3.

Mumford supports the title of his eighth chapter, "that by offering our actions for the souls in Purgatory, we do not less but more satisfy for our own sins," are clearly inapplicable to the Heroic Act.

The first is that "this loss may fully be repaired by the gaining of Indulgences for ourselves." But the fervent charity of the Faithful, that since Father Mumford's time has found expression in the Heroic Act, includes in its offering all the rich treasures of Indulgences gained; and thus it is that the Popes have rendered applicable to the souls in Purgatory all Indulgences which are gained by the Faithful who have made this offering, even though they are not applicable to the dead when gained by others.

Father Mumford further maintains, and most truly, that the devotion of offering our satisfactions for the holy souls "is a rare kind of satisfaction." He affirms that the act of giving away, "with so great charity to God and our neighbour," that which might have been offered in satisfaction for our own sins, is in itself an act of such merit that by it we "do both satisfy for our sins, and satisfy in no mean manner, but in a manner far more excellent than is ordinarily conceived" (p. 45). Thus those who give their satisfactions to the souls in Purgatory "are so far from depriving themselves of all satisfaction that, as often as they give their satisfactory works away, they heap up great treasures of satisfaction" (p. 48), and so "may have justly great hopes of avoiding all, or a very great part, of their Purgatory pains;" and again, "the forgiveness of temporal pains in Purgatory . . . may be purchased by this devotion" (p. 56).

The whole of Father Mumford's argument is perfectly good. It is true that the charity of giving away what we might retain has great merit, and that every meritorious work is also satisfactory ; but the argument is inapplicable to the indulgenced devotion of the Heroic Act, for the pious ingenuity of a self-sacrificing charity has perceived that this very satisfaction might be offered also in behalf of others, as well as all else that might avail in mitigation of our own debt of temporal punishment.

The Heroic Act of Charity is in fact an offer to God, through our Blessed Lady's hands, to bear in our own persons the debt due to His justice in Purgatory, when our time shall come ; and a prayer that He may be pleased to accept all that might in any way have mitigated our pains, in behalf of those holy souls whom the Blessed Virgin shall choose for that benefit. Such is the act of devotion that is fitly called heroic ; and it has been thought desirable to point out the manner in which Father Mumford's admirable exhortations differ from and fall short of it, in order that no one, who should feel his heart moved to perform so excellent a work of charity, may, through misunderstanding, fail to give to the Holy Souls the greatest offering of which he is capable.

And lest any should be alarmed and lose courage at the prospect of the cost to themselves involved in the very heroism of this devotion, it may be well, even at the risk of briefly repeating what Father Mumford has well said, to set down here in short the advantages that will abundantly repay that cost. Nor need we fear that the contemplation of those advantages will

lessen the disinterestedness, and therefore the heroism. The prospect of reward is God's own method of encouragement. The more disinterested and the more heroic a good work is, the greater is the reward that awaits it. A martyr, in the most heroic of all heroic acts, while giving his life for God, is told to look for the crown of life that is promised to those who shall be faithful unto death.* *Noli oblivisci omnes retributiones Ejus*—"Forget not all His rewards," is the counsel of the Psalmist, whose own heart was inclined to do God's justifications for ever, "for the reward."† And our Divine Redeemer Himself, the King of Martyrs and the example of all heroism, *proposito sibi gaudio*, "having joy proposed unto Him, underwent the Cross, despising the shame."‡ The truth is, that the very contemplation of the reward, the prospect of the exceeding great benefit to ourselves in return for so little, at least little in comparison, is the way to a clearer knowledge of the goodness of our Heavenly Father, and is thus the incentive of the Saints to the acquisition of the pure and entirely disinterested love of God.

The first advantage of the Heroic Act is that which Father Mumford has so well described, and which is summed up so excellently in the passage quoted by him (pp. 29, 55) from St. Thomas, "Essential reward is infinitely better than the forgiveness of temporal pain." No degree of temporal punishment, however great and however long, can be put into comparison with an increase of eternal glory. For the Heroic

* Apoc. ii. 10.

† Psal. cii. 2 ; cxviii. 112.

‡ Heb. xii. 2.

Act the reward is infinitely greater than the cost. The difference is infinite; for while temporal punishment, however severe, is finite in intensity and finite in duration, the reward in glory is the possession in a greater degree of the infinite God, and that for an eternity. Such an increased degree of glory constitutes a new Heaven. Had that one meritorious action been the only one to be rewarded, it would have received from the justice of God a Heaven for its reward, the eternal possession of God in a degree proportioned to its merit. If the offer were made to any one of an increased degree of glory, that is, of a greater knowledge of God, and a greater love of God for all eternity, at the price of any degree of temporal suffering, it would be a suicidal act of cowardice not to accept the offer. This is the very essence of the Heroic Act. It is an exchange of satisfaction for merit, of Purgatory for Heaven, of time for eternity, of pain for glory and for God.

The second advantage consists in this, that it is heroic. It is undoubtedly a great offering to make, an act of charity involving one of the greatest sacrifices that we are capable of offering to God. Our debt as it is now due, and, alas! the further debt that we may be so unhappy as to contract during all the remainder of our lives, we deliberately take upon ourselves to pay "to the last farthing."* The pain of sense assigned by the Divine Justice as the due equivalent of our sinful turning to creatures, and the delay of the Beatific Vision, with the indescribable pain of the loving yearning of the waiting soul, we

* St. Matt. v. 26.

must look forward to ; and we do not appropriate to ourselves the treasures within our reach, by which that pain may be mitigated and that term of waiting shortened. Surely such an Act deserves the name of Heroic, that the Church has sanctioned. Now there are very few acts of our lives that deserve so to be called. Can we afford to throw away the opportunity of performing one? To do one for the love of God may obtain for us the great grace of another: perhaps of *one* other, during our lives ; and what a difference one heroic act would make to our place in Heaven !

Every habit must commence by single acts. Habitual heroism is the life of a Saint. This one act may be the commencement of a chain of graces strengthening us to perform heroic acts that may constitute saintliness. And this Heroic Act for the souls in Purgatory is the very one for a soul "zealous for the better gifts,"* yet fearful of its own weakness ; for, when the time shall come for the pain to be borne, the dispositions cannot possibly fail. There can be no murmurings, no repinings or regrets in the sinless land of Purgatory, no want of conformity with the Divine Will, no impatience or want of courage, nothing but a brave joy that God's glory was advanced and that redeemed souls had entered the sooner into the possession of God.

The third advantage is, that it is not only an Heroic Act, but an Heroic Act of Charity. "Greater love than this no man hath, that a man lay down his life," his soul, *animam suam*, "for his friends."† "In this we have known the charity of God, because He

* 1 Cor. xii. 31.

† St. John xv. 13.

hath laid down His life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren."* Our Lord has come to introduce the law of vicarious suffering. "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so shall you fulfil the law of Christ."† Those, therefore, who are pressed by the charity of Christ‡ will rejoice in an act of charity, by the heroic self-denial and sacrifice of which, "seeking not her own,"§ they are conformed to the image of the perfect Charity that "was wounded for our iniquities and was bruised for our sins."||

And this particular act of charity bears a close resemblance to one of the noblest that it has entered into the heart of a Saint to conceive. St. Ignatius was willing, if thereby he might do good to the souls of others, to remain in this world, with all its uncertainty of final salvation, rather than die at once and be certain that he was saved. It falls little short of the glorious exaggeration of the charity of the Apostle, who "wished to be an anathema from Christ"¶ for his brethren. To the delay of the Beatific Vision, which is the hard part of the sacrifice of the Heroic Act, St. Ignatius would have added in his charity that uncertainty of eternal salvation which the Heroic Act not only does not include but diminishes.

The fourth advantage of the Heroic Act is that it is a service rendered to God, and so makes those who perform it pleasing to Him. Propitiation is one of the ends of sacrifice. The sacrifice of charity in behalf of the holy souls in Purgatory cannot fail to

* 1 St. John iii. 16.

† Gal. vi. 2.

‡ 2 Cor. v. 14.

§ 1 Cor. xiii. 5.

|| Isa. liii. 5.

¶ Rom. ix. 3.

render God propitious ; that is, it will induce Him to look down on us and treat us with favour, in a degree that we should not otherwise have deserved or obtained. He has been pleased to leave largely to us the exercise of His royal prerogative of mercy in behalf of the poor prisoners of His justice. We can move Him by our prayers, and we can offer to Him some little in compensation for those who can do nothing for themselves but suffer. But He is willing to be moved. It is pleasing to Him to be entreated to use His proper attribute of mercy, for He is God, *Cui proprium est misereri semper et parcere*—"Whose property it is ever to have mercy and to spare." But mercy belongs to the time of probation only, and, were it not for the Communion of Saints, in which the dead yet live in their fellow-members of the Body of Christ, after death there would be no forgiveness. Purgatory would not end until the debt was fully paid. Its sufferings are what divines call satisfassion, and not satisfaction. It is, therefore, most pleasing to God when, by our use of the freewill He has intrusted to us in this time of our probation, we move Him to have mercy and to forgive.

And He is especially served in the manner that pleases Him when, through our means, His creatures are brought to the end for which He made them. When one of the holy souls enters Heaven, the end of its creation is accomplished. It sees and enjoys that God to know and to possess Whom it was made. And this we are hastening when, by the Heroic Act, we help the waiting souls to exchange their Purgatory for the Paradise of God. We offer all by way of

suffrage, even holy Indulgences from the great treasury of the satisfactions of Christ and His Saints; but the suffrages are offered to a most loving Creator and Father, and cause Him to look with increased tenderness on those who offer them.

The fifth advantage is the joy thereby given to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. To help the holy souls is to cooperate with Him in the dear work of their redemption. If in the Agony in the Garden the bitterest drop in His chalice must have been the neglect of the graces of His Passion, the greatest consolation we can offer to His Sacred Heart is that His merits should be applied to the end for which He offered them. That we have any satisfactions to offer comes from Him. They are really His, while they are ours. All their efficacy, all their value is from their union with Him. From Him is the sanctifying grace, the actual grace; from Him the desire to promote God's glory and the good of souls; from Him the meritorious actions which satisfy God's justice; by Him were the treasures gathered together from which Indulgences are drawn, and from Him is the power of the keys by which they are dispensed; from Him the charity that others may show us after our death and the Masses that may be offered on our behalf; from Him the act of charity by which they are all freely given away.

And then, the holy souls to whom they are given are His dear Spouses, who have been faithful to Him through the last conflict, and who are the precious fruit of His painful Passion. Those who help these dear souls touch the Sacred Heart of our Lord, and

move Him to a tender and almighty gratitude, for, in behalf of the souls that He loved more dearly than His life, they "fill up those things that are wanting of the sufferings of Christ,"* those things that He has purposely left for His members to bear with Him.

The sixth advantage is the patronage of Mary. The Heroic Act is made into her hands, and by it our heavenly treasures are placed at her disposal. What offering could be more grateful to our Blessed Mother, whose children are suffering? It would be hard for us to find any means by which we can insure for ourselves more certainly our Mother's interest and watchful care. The more meritorious actions we perform, the more satisfactions our Blessed Lady has at her disposal. That our good actions should be more frequent and more fervent is her gain. What divine inspirations and impulses, what providential opportunities, what courage, what success, what perseverance, will be the fruit of our well-placed confidence in Mary? The Blessed Virgin made Saints of those to whom she confided the work of the ransom of captives which we commemorate under the title of Our Lady of Mercy, encouraging them to bind themselves by vow to give themselves into captivity in order to procure the liberation of those who were in bondage; and most assuredly she will not forget the needs, or be slow to hear the prayers of those who willingly undergo imprisonment for the spiritual ransom and redemption of souls.

We need not fear, because we are losing the control over our satisfactions and Indulgences, that we cannot

* Col. i. 24.

help whom we please, however dear they may be to us, for it is not to the hands of a stranger that we intrust them. It is our Mother to whom we give them, who loves those whom we love, and who will be the more ready to help them for our sakes when we appeal to her generosity on their behalf. We do not give away our power of praying, and we satisfy all the claims of kindred or friendship upon us by the strengthened power of our prayer. For, not only when the souls of others are recommended to her intercession, but in any prayer, to whom should she turn a willing ear, if not to those who have intrusted to her all in their power, for distribution at her good pleasure?

The seventh advantage is the happiness of the holy Angels. From their entrance into Heaven a throne in their midst has been vacant, and it is filled as a soul comes forth from Purgatory. There is joy amongst them all, but we can figure to ourselves in particular the contentment of the Archangel St. Michael, "the prince, *super omnes animas suscipiendas*, over all the souls that are received;" and the happiness of the Guardian Angel, who has waited so patiently through life and has watched so lovingly at the gates of Purgatory, and who can now joyfully present before God the object of all that waiting and watching. As a mother would prize a benefit conferred on the weakest and most helpless of her children, on whom she has poured out the rich stores of her love, so, and much more, will an Angel Guardian value all that is done on behalf of his helpless charge.

The eighth advantage is in the friendship of the Saints. As the pains of hell are all the more grievous for each additional soul that enters in there, so Heaven is the happier for each accession to the number of its blessed inhabitants. Every Saint in Heaven is rejoiced at the entrance of a soul to share his happiness. The Saints are thus indebted to those who hasten the admission into glory of their friends and future companions ; and who shall measure the advantage to be derived from the gratitude of the Saints who reign with Christ ?

The ninth advantage is from the gratitude of the souls that have been succoured by us. Let us imagine a soul in Heaven, conscious, in the fulness of its enjoyment of God, that the day of its entrance into the possession of its heavenly inheritance has been anticipated on our account. It owes to us the Beatific Vision, for the time which would otherwise have been spent in longing desires. Now, in that vision of God it sees our wants ; now, in its fresh-found union with God, its prayers have an efficacy which they have not known before. We can thus secure to ourselves an advocate before the throne of God during the dangers of life and death, until all shall be safe, and our congratulations mingle with our thanksgivings in Heaven ; mutual benefactors and mutually benefitted rejoicing together.

The tenth advantage accrues to ourselves from the consciousness of the offering that we have made of our satisfactions and of all that might diminish our personal debt of punishment. Our attention will thus be drawn to the consequences of venial sin, and we

shall be induced more earnestly than ever to shrink with great tenderness of conscience from all that could add to the debt we have already incurred.

It will be seen that by the Heroic Act we are far indeed from giving up everything. Sacrifice has its four ends, and every good action has in some degree the nature of a sacrifice. Now, of these four fruits we give up one and only one. We give up satisfaction, which corresponds to punishment, and to nothing else. But the adoration and service of God we perform in a manner more to His glory. Personal merit we could not part with if we would, for every man shall be judged according to his works,* and merit is the measure of the reward that each one shall receive at the hands of the all-just Judge. An increase of merit means an increase of grace here, and an increase of glory hereafter; and this, and not any loss, is the fruit of the Heroic Act. Propitiation is strengthened by it; and our power of impetration, that is, not only our power of praying for whom we will, but of applying to any intention the impetratory power of our good works, is not included in it. It is expressly declared that a Priest's power of offering the Holy Sacrifice for whom he wills, is not surrendered by it, but that what he gives is the satisfactory part of that special fruit of the Mass that belongs to himself.

To all these manifest advantages we may add the great spiritual concessions of the Church, which are of a character to show the judgment entertained by the Holy See of this devotion. The Indult of a Privileged Altar for a certain number of days in each week is a

* St. Matt. xvi. 27; Rom. ii. 6.

grant not unfrequently made to Priests by the Pope in answer to personal application, and it is a favour deservedly prized. All Priests who have made the Heroic Act have thereby this personal privilege conferred on them, extended to every day in the year; that is to say, by every Mass said for the Faithful departed the Pope applies, by the power of the keys, an Indulgence sufficient, if God should be pleased so to accept it, for the liberation of a soul from Purgatory. Lay persons who have made the Heroic Act have, in addition to all the other Indulgences within their reach, this further one, of a Plenary Indulgence for the benefit of the holy souls at every Communion they make. Then, even without Holy Communion, there is the very rare concession of a Plenary Indulgence for hearing Mass in suffrage for the holy souls, on Monday if possible; but if the Mass cannot be heard on that day, then the Indulgence is granted for assisting at Mass on Sunday. The only other condition for these Indulgences is some prayer for the Pope's intention in a church or public oratory. And lastly, as has already been noticed, all Indulgences granted hitherto, or to be granted in the future, though ordinarily not applicable to the dead, are made available by the Pope for the pious ends of this highly favoured devotion.

The terms of the concession call for one further remark. It pleased the paternal heart of our Holy Father Pius IX. to think of children who have not yet made their first Communion, of the poor sick, of those afflicted with chronic disorders, of the aged, of farm-labourers, and of prisoners, and compassionately

to grant, by a decree expressly issued in their behalf, that Bishops may empower confessors to commute the condition of Holy Communion into some other pious work. Those who are timid, and afraid to make this heroic offering, may thus see for whom the Pope thought it necessary to make provision, as amongst those whom he contemplated as likely to avail themselves of this means of increasing their merit and helping others.

And to facilitate the devotion we are taught that no form of words is necessary, and that "nothing more is required than a hearty act of our will." In words then, brief as an ejaculation, we may make the Heroic Act. "Dear Lord, I make the offering of all I can give to the holy souls, through the hands of Thy Blessed Mother." And not less briefly it can be renewed day by day. No doubt it does not need renewal, but we shall feel the benefit ourselves if we renew it constantly. It will keep alive within us a tender charity for the holy souls, and a desire to increase the worth of our offering by the fervour of our lives, for it is by a frequent repetition of acts that our will acquires both force and fervour.

JOHN MORRIS, S.J.

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Feast of Our Lady of Mercy, 1871.

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